

## I write my life in a dirty cheap Notebook

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# I write my life in a dirty cheap Notebook

by [Idespisemilk](#)

## Summary

"I gotta- I lost my dad!" He whines as he struggles to get out of the soldier's grip. He has to get in the same car as them, he has to be with them!

The soldier only grunts, sitting him down beside a lady who hadn't stopped crying since she was boarded on and quickly puts his seatbelt on.

"You'll see them again kid, I swear on it. But we have to get everyone loaded up before it's too late ok?" The soldier tells him, and all Tommy can do is whine while nodding. He just wants his family.

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Or

Tommy is a ten year old lost in the apocalypse trying to find his family and ends up writing his days in a notebook he found in a store

## Notes

**((TW: Minor character death, minor injuries, dead people and watching others die, guns ,Blood and implied suicides. ALSO MENTIONED CHILD DEATH. ))**

Remember this is a fanfic an nothing that happens in it is real!! You are safe <3 stay hydrated fools

Starting another chaptered story while i suffer in the hands of google docs. BUT LOL ANYWAY at least i know I'm gonna have prewritten stories down so i can make this somewhat good

Also if i had to pick a song for Tommy in this It's A million years ago by Adele wOooo

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## Come rest your bones

His birthdays gonna be in a week and Tommy is over the moon about it. He's already given his class the invitations already picked where it would take place. Tommy even picked out his cake this year, a soft colored blue for frosting and little clouds decorating the cake. His dad had to hold him down when he saw the picture the lady had made because of how excited he was.

The bowling alley, that's where he wanted his birthday to be. Techno and Wilbur loved that place and Tommy wanted them to enjoy it, he wanted them to think Tommy was a big kid like they were.

*"Ten years old is nowhere close to seventeen Tommy." Wilbur teases as Tommy climbs onto his brother's lap, "You'll always be the little baby, our little baby brother!"*

Tommy currently is nine years old, he's the youngest in his family and possibly the most spoiled one. His father would've given him the world, His brothers did anything he asked. He's nine years old and he had the best family in the world, a family he would never dare replace.

He's slowly making his way up in school, slowly becoming the almost grown up he dreamed of. Soon another birthday would come and Tommy could be older. He was so close to living like the people he saw on TV, Dreaming of nights where he's sixteen and he's snuck out to have fun.

He day-dreams about being in high school, imagining himself at parties when a movie showed one. Tommy had been so ready to live his life, so ready to be someone.

Tommy's a week away from being ten and he's so excited for his birthday to come.

But the news people tell him bad things, his father rushes around their home demanding they pack whatever is necessary and Tommy is terrified. His older brother Techno demands he stay away from windows and the front door, and Wilbur carries him into the twins' shared

room only to leave to pack Tommy's bag. The news tells him that bad people are walking around, the screaming outside tells him it's not safe.

“Hey buddy- Look Here hold this ok? Dads about to make sure it's safe and we'll leave very soon ok?” Wilbur says as he comes back in the room handing Tommy a small bag, he sees how his older brother seems to act brave. But he knows Wilbur is just as scared as Tommy is.

Tommy pouts twisting at the straps of the bag, “Why can't we just stay home until it's over?” he questions as Wilbur's face twists up.

Wilbur only sighs, moving to pack his own things as Tommy watches from the boy's bed.

“It's not safe to stay here Tommy.” The older one answers back. The truth, *It's not gonna be over any time soon*, it's left unsaid.

The blonde only continues to pout ignorant to the real danger that lies outside his home, ignorant to the brutal truth the world will share with him soon enough.

Tommy is nine years old when his world ends in the blink of an eye.

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Tommy isn't allowed to look out the windows once Phil rushed them in the car. In fact his brothers have been tasked with making sure he doesn't even get a peek, but he hears the screaming and the gunshots.

“Can we listen to music?” Tommy asked once, not asking again when Phil snapped and said the news had to stay on. Everyone's stressed so Tommy chooses to stay quiet to help them not be as stressed.

So Tommy listens to the news lady talking, it's buzzing and annoying but it's something that isn't scary like the sounds outside.

*"Government officials are demanding that you either lock yourself inside or hurry to the main zone. Army trucks are rolling in at the minute waiting to-"* The radio cuts out ending with a long beep that droned on forever that forces Phil to turn it off with a loud curse.

"Dad it's fine- We have the directions it'll be ok!" Techno pipes up straining his voice as their dad jolts the car as if he was doing something, "Just focus on the road Dad ok?"

"Alright, *alright*. I'm focusing, I swear." Phil sighs rolling his fingers and he nods, and the car is plunged into silence.

Tommy kicks his feet. Wilbur shakes in his seat, Techno mumbles directions to Phil and Phil is driving fast. It's quiet but not calm, and because everyone's focused on something that isn't Tommy he takes a chance to peek through the windows.

Everything seemed fine, so fine that it scared Tommy. Like there was something wrong out there, something dreadful begging him to stay in the car. There was nothing out there, just a dead silent street passing by confusing Tommy at what needed to be hidden away from him. There's a few cars that have doors open as if each owner abandoned them, one house that has a soccer ball left outside in the newly mowed lawn. It was like the owners had finished playing outside, maybe going inside to watch TV together.

Maybe the kid who owned the ball was out playing, Tommy would've been doing the exact same thing if he wasn't in the car.

He wonders at that moment if he could steal one of Techno's soccer balls at home when they get back, he probably would do it if he remembers.

It's so quiet, that the scream Tommy lets out when he sees a man eating a small body outside makes everyone panic. *It was so bloody and Tommy swears the kid didn't have his*

*right arm. He screams and he cries because Tommy never did well with blood or death.*

The car jolts to the side and Wilbur is hurrying Tommy's sight away from the window and the kid is sobbing into his brother's arms. He hears the other two in the car curse and they try to comfort him as well but all Tommy sees is that dead kid.

Wilbur coos as he also shakes with Tommy, and Tommy sobs in the yellow fuzzy sweater the boy had on. "Bubba it's ok, it's ok I promise." Wilbur whispers rocking Tommy back and forth as he wails and wails.

"Just close your eyes for a bit, ok? Everything's gonna be alright." Wilbur promises and Tommy tries his best to keep them closed. But he can hear Wilbur start to cry as well.

"I swear i didn't mean to not pay attention-"

"-It's fine Wil, everything's stressful right now no one is blaming you."

A shudder and a quiet gasp escapes Wilbur, but Tommy finds himself slowly slipping into a restless sleep.

*"God Dad he- Tommy saw- Dad that kid was dead..oh my god"*

Tommy falls asleep oblivious to the threat outside, he dreams of a boy kicking a soccer ball as destruction reveals around him.

He won't see how pale his family was, how sick they were from the thought.

He won't know that the one thing that entered their mind was *what if that was them? What if it was Tommy laying dead on the cement road while some stranger who shouldn't be walking ripped his skin apart?* It's a horrible thought, and it's something that motivates them to make sure they all stay together.

Safe and sound, no one being forced away from this life before they're ready.

Wilbur looks down at the sleeping boy in his arms and grimaces. *I promise you I'll keep you safe even if it kills me in the end.* And the car keeps moving faster at the minute.

Tommy gets to sleep for twenty minutes, twenty minutes of sleep Wilbur knew the boy would need.

"It's not far now dad, we're almost right there." Techno interrupts, disturbing the unwanted tense silence, "Just take two more rights."

Wilbur shifts up accidentally waking up Tommy who he shoots a small apology at when the boy whined, "Are we even sure this is a safe thing? We could've been lied to."

A swift right.

"It's better than staying locked up waiting for someone to bust in." Techno shoots back glaring at the road ahead.

The older twin scoffs, "We had enough things at home that would've kept us safe." He grunts out, crossing his arms tightly together.

"And an entire army base has more safety than that house. With them we have a better chance of surviving!" The other shouts back, Tommy whines again at the loudness and Phil groans.

Phil looks up in the rear view mirror and sends Wilbur a tired, strained smile, "Wil, if it's sketchy when we get there I promise I'll drive away fast, but we can't not give this a chance." His dad promises him, and that's the end of the conversation.



Phil makes the last right and suddenly they all see tanks and Army trucks lined up. They see people covered head to toe in protective armor, guns pointed around in case a dead one was around.

Wilbur sees heavy covered vans lined up, *there had to be like twenty of them at least* . Ignorant to Phil slowing to a stop as an Army guard signs at him to stop he looks at all the people.

Kids who didn't understand the danger ran around laughing, Teens watching them carefully looking terrified at what was out there. Strangers crying or staying dead silent, parents watching all the kid's just to stay safe.

It's a shit show and Wilbur wants to go home.

But the guard tells Phil they have to leave the car behind, that they'll be together and taken to safety. So they're ushered out, taking what they could hold as the people watch out for danger.

Phil turns to Wilbur looking more and more tired at the minute, "You get Tommy mate, me and Techno can hold your bags just make sure he stays with you." The older demands, reaching for Wilbur's bags which he willingly gives up.

"Wil look at all the guns!" Tommy giggles out once Wilbur had grabbed onto the boy's hand tightly. "Look, they even got the tanks from the movies!"

Wilbur hums rushing to catch up with his family as Tommy points out *every* detail he sees.

"You still think it's sketchy?" Techno asks once he catches up, both ignoring how Tommy still kept pointing things out.

Wilbur hums uncertain, "It does seem..safe? I don't know yet I just know I'm fucking-" He chokes up, grip loosening slightly on Tommy's hand without realizing.

"I think I'm scared, Techno."

Tommy wiggles his way out of his hold, but neither rush to grab him seeing as the boy didn't move. Just turning in awe at the new sights the kid got to see.

His twin sighs, "I think we all are, it was so unexpected."

Wilbur can only nod looking around at the massive group of scared and worried people, it was unexpected that's not a lie.

Wilbur thought he would have woken up in his bed ready to finish some homework for school. Work on his guitar lessons and listen to his family chat about their day.

He thought he would've been able to go to more gatherings, watch Tommy grow up to be a normal kid. He *assumed* he would've been sitting down at the dinner table tonight listening to Dad talk about work as Techno eats silently. Tommy would've been moaning about the food yet still eating it like it's his favorite.

But here they are. In a world that's turned on them in the blink of an eye, no more school or parties. No more home to go to, no walking outside without worrying that someone's gonna eat you alive.

He takes one more look at Tommy, who seemed to recover from that *image*, and he sees a boy who's about to grow up way too soon for his liking.

Tommy turns to him and smiles so bright, and Wilbur knows he won't ever have it in him to be the one that shows Tommy the world isn't the same anymore.

So Wilbur smiles back and acts like everything will be ok.

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" *Tommy* Dad said you have to stay beside me." Wilbur groans out for the fifth time, holding the struggling nine year old up in the air.

Tommy whines louder, "Everyone else gets to play!"

More wiggling that forces Wilbur to place the boy on the ground, though he doesn't let go because he knows if he does Tommy's just gonna run off again.

They've been here for half an hour, being told that they can't leave until a few more survivors show up. The government demanded that they get as many people as they could.

"And you can play when we know it's safe Tommy, just because other kids get to play doesn't mean you can." He states wishing Phil was back over here instead of checking the bags for the millionth time.

Tommy didn't even let Phil take the small bag off his back, stating that the boy wanted it on him at all times because Henry was there.

A lady moves up to them smiling softly at Tommy and Wilbur and Wilbur mentally groans, "It wouldn't hurt for him to play a little bit, my own kid is out there. It could be good for him?" She says and Wilbur knows she's trying to be nice. He knows that.

But he *hates* when strangers budge in on conversations that don't involve them. It was rude to him in every way possible, "I just don't want him getting lost when it comes time to leave." He says politely, he can't cause any issues.

"You could just go with him, that way you aren't separated." She tries again, ignoring the look he shoots towards his father, "I could even watch him for you, god knows the kid's need to focus on something else."

Wilbur doesn't even get a chance to tell her to leave before Tommy already manages to escape, running towards the group of kids faster than ever.

"Fucking wonderful!" Moving to rush towards Tommy he feels a hand grab him, and he's almost ready to hit whoever it was until he sees it's his dad.

Phil sends a smile at the lady who found it all amusing, *and oh god did Wilbur wanna scream*, before looking back at Wilbur with a softer smile.

"Let him play for a bit Wil, it won't hurt to take a break." Phil says pulling Wilbur away from the lady, "We can still see him from here so it's fine."

"Dad- what if something happens? Someone could snatch him and we wouldn't know!" Wilbur shouts out as he's dragged back towards the bags.

"Mate there's like fifty people with guns, I don't think anything could get near Tommy if it screamed dangerous." His father laughs but it doesn't make Wilbur feel any better.

So he sits there and he watches Tommy get chased by other kids, he watches Tommy have the time of his life as his family stresses out. Glares at anyone who got too close, he was ready to get up and grab Tommy if anything went wrong.

Yet it's the one time Wilbur looks away where everything goes wrong, Phil called him over to check out something and Wilbur begrudgingly went over. *Because if nothing happened for thirty minutes why would anything happen when he finally looked away?*

And once he gets right by Phil and Techno everything goes to shit, guards are rushing into vehicles, some stay behind to protect and others usher them away.

There's shooting and screaming, someone screams about the dead getting in and his family is being pushed as others rush towards safety.

He grabs Phil and Techno, and immediately remembers Tommy isn't there. *Tommy isn't here.*

"Dad! Dad Tommy-" He screams as a man barges into his shoulder, "I don't see Tommy!"

*Wilbur never wants to see the heartbroken look on Phil's face after his father registers that.*

They all turn towards where they last saw Tommy, and Wilbur hears his name being screamed.

"WILBY!?" Echo's against the crowds frantic screams.

Phil screams with everything he has in him as they all try to push towards Tommy, "TOMMY JUST STAY WHERE YOU ARE OK?"

"PAPA!" Tommy cries out, and Wilbur sees him *right fucking there* . So close but so far, blood is covered on the ground and people fall down.

And right as Wilbur reaches out, all three of them are pulled far away as they scream for their youngest. As they struggle against the soldiers even when they're forced into the car.

The last thing They hear is Tommy shouting for them, and the door is slammed shut.

Wilbur screams and screams for them to let him out, that his baby brother is still out there.

"Sir- sir we understand what you're saying we do. But it's against our orders, I swear you're kid's fine. The cars are being taken to the same place you'll see him again!" One of the soldiers tells Phil, raising his hands up in surrender at Phil's frantic screams.

That doesn't help one bit.

"My *kid* is still out there and you're telling me you can't just look?!" Phil screams as everyone sits down.

The soldier only shakes his head and Wilbur hears Techno cry out when the vehicle begins to move against their will.

*He looked away for one second, and suddenly Tommy wasn't with them anymore.*

"Everyone will be reunited once we get to zone X. The other survivors will see each other again." The man finishes trying his best to calm them down, but it won't ever work.

"That is if my son even survived." Phil says mournfully looking away from the man, holding his sons close as they cried.

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Tommy knows things aren't okay, but he just wanted to play with the other kids.

He just wanted to have fun and now he's regretting leaving his family's side.

It happened so fast, Apparently a few mean people managed to sneak in. Taking down victims without hesitating and the guard people are ushering them all away.

He's pushed around as hundreds of bodies run around, he screams and screams for his family. *He remembers seeing pink hair and his Fathers frantic face , and remembers Wilbur reaching for him before the crowd took over his sight.*

He did try to run towards them, but someone had grabbed him fast rushing towards a different vehicle, not even once letting him go as he screamed.

"I gotta- I lost my dad!" He whines as he struggles to get out of the soldier's grip. He has to get in the same car as them, he has to be with them!

The soldier only grunts, sitting him down beside a lady who hadn't stopped crying since she was boarded on and quickly puts his seatbelt on.

"You'll see them again kid, I swear on it. But we have to get everyone loaded up before it's too late, ok?" The soldier tells him sternly, and all Tommy can do is whine while nodding. He just wants his family.

"W-what if they didn't get rescued?" Tommy asks once the same person buckles in.

They don't say anything yet, sending Tommy a look he won't understand.

"They've been put up safely, don't worry kid. Once we get to the zone I'll personally help you find them." The soldier promises, and that's it.

The car takes off fast and the lady hasn't stopped crying, Tommy gasps when he realizes there's blood on her so he quickly looks away.

There's another teenager with them, a few other people who seemed to be huddled together.

Tommy grabs his bag tighter and focuses on himself. *They'll know when Tommy gets there he tells himself, he's wearing Techno's red jacket that's way too big on him but it's bringing*

*him comfort. They know what Tommy's shoes look like, they know what Tommy looks like.*

*His family will see him again and they'll hug him and kiss him, he won't be alone again.*

He can't even look out the windows, it looks so dark and he can barely make anything out *and the crying lady is really getting on his nerves.*

So Tommy pulls out Henry and he imagines it's his brother crying beside him, imagines that this is just a road trip and everything is gonna be okay.

*Nothing is gonna be okay because he isn't with his family who would've protected him with every bone in their body.*

Here's something everyone in his family knew about Tommy. He's sheltered, unable to protect himself because he's never had to. Not when Dad was a hallway away or his older brother's were just a shout away.

He's never had to care for himself because his family did that for him, spoiled him rotten with love and adoration. Tommy used to get picked on by the high schoolers, yet the second he cried to Techno about it.

He never got picked on again.

Tommy hated cutting his own food, absolutely despised it because when his dad did it for him he felt *loved* . He's only cut his food twice in his life, no need to cut his food when Papa did it without being asked.

He cried the two times he had to do it on his own because his tiny heart told him his dad didn't like him. *He was five years old, of course nothing made sense.*



If Tommy asked for something Wilbur would've immediately done it, he wants a book to be read to him? Done. He wants Wilbur to hold him? Already on it. Tommy asks once for Wilbur to sing to him and hasn't gone a day without listening to whatever Wilbur decides to sing.

*Wilbur didn't get to sing to him today.*

But now there's no answer to his calls, no hallway to walk down. There's no one Tommy knows in this car and he's terrified.

"How long until we get there?" The teenager questions that made everyone look up, *except the lady who was still crying but Tommy noticed her holding her arm tightly.*

The soldier grunts looking at a map for a second. "Five hours at most, if everything goes right I'd say three maybe. But even that's asking for a lot."

Tommy whines out at that, *that's so long!*

"And if anything goes wrong?" The same person asks and the air grows thick.

No one gets an answer and Tommy is left confused. The soldier looks away and the Teen looks ready to cry, the other people go back to ignoring everyone else.

Tommy doesn't even wanna look at the lady anymore.

He focuses on the bumps they hit and at one point even started counting each bump just to not be as bored.

*He thinks they've finally hit the first hour into the ride after the Teenager started looking more calm. He finds out he's correct when the soldier informs them of such.*

Tommy's gonna reunite with his Family and it'll be like the movies. They'll hug and run towards each other and everyone's gonna be so jealous of them.

*There's a groan beside him, the lady had fallen asleep awhile back and Tommy was grateful because it was more quiet.*

And Phil won't put him down forever, Tommy's gonna feel like a king because of that. Techno's gonna be so happy and won't pick on him anymore, Wilbur will sing him a song and everything will be ok.

*The lady stirs groaning again and Tommy notices how big the blood got on her.*

And- and Tommy will get to see them alive.

She's..she's really really pale Tommy realizes. Like a vampire colored pale, selling the look with the blood soaking her body as if she had her first meal in a long time.

Tommy will be alive when he sees them again. He will survive and walk out this car alive and they'll see each other again.

The lady stops groaning, Tommy assumes she went back to sleep.

Then she lunges at Tommy growling harshly and he immediately screams in fear, the soldier rushes up screaming something and everyone else panics.

He quickly unbuckles himself, rushing out the seat onto the floor screaming loudly as she tries grabbing him.

A shot rings out and suddenly the only thing he hears is a loud buzz. The lady slumps over and distantly Tommy realizes her blood is on him.

Tommy's gonna stay alive.

He feels the car twist fast, everyone shouts as Tommy flies up in the air as the car slams on its side. The last thing Tommy sees is the fearful look of the teenager, and suddenly he hits the ground and sees nothing but a void.

*He just has to walk out alive.*

---

Tommy wakes up being dragged and has half a mind time to start telling Techno to lay off.

But when he opens his eyes with a whine he realizes that one, that's not Techno. Two, this isn't home, he's outside and he smells smoke.

The soldier is the one pulling him out a window, and When Tommy goes to look down he hears the person make an aborted noise.

They also make a pained noise as if moving was hurting them.

"Don't- kid just pay attention to me ok? I have your stuff just god please don't look away from me." They plead as they fully pull him out, they're both covered in blood.

Tommy doesn't look at the vehicle, but he does notice it's just them out here. His head hurts really really bad, his arm is stinging and it *smells*.

"Where- Where's everyone else?" He mumbles out grunting when they both fall into the ground, "What happened?"

They only shake rushing to grab a gun as Tommy is pulled tightly into a chest, "The lady she wasn't, she got bit kid. She wasn't ok anymore and I- it's just us for now ok?" They inform him but Tommy's still confused. Especially when they start pushing him up.

"Kid look I, I can't fucking walk or run my legs messed up. And *god* -" They choke up mid sentence and It scares Tommy, "I know I promised I'd bring you to your family but I can't kiddo, there's a group of them coming and I can't escape with you."

Tommy whines out clutching onto their arm as they shake, "We can just get back in the car! It's ok right?"

Another sigh and Tommy is pushed away. Only then does he notice the large deep cut in their right leg, he wants to sob at the sight.

"Listen to me alright? You take this map and you follow the lines, you run as fast as you fucking can and you don't ever *ever* look back." The guard demands as Tommy is pushed further back.

Tommy shakes as a map is forced into his hands, "I don't wanna be alone! Just get up please!" He begs refusing to move further.

The helmet is removed and Tommy is met with blue short hair and a mournful smile.

"I can't do that, I can't run like you can. Me going with you is just a slower death for me and a painful one for you, you're so young you can't die with me." They say and Tommy hears leaves crunch. More louder groaning fills the air and they both stiffen.

"Remember what I said, the second I shoot this gun you run. Please don't look back, don't stop until you know it's safe." They cry out as Tommy slowly backs away.

"You keep living."

A gun is raised into the air and Tommy bolts the second the hand reaches the trigger.

He cries as he runs, cries as he hears the gun go off and the person screams at him to keep running.

He runs with his entire life on the line and he's terrified. That guard is the only reason Tommy is alive and not one of the dead, the reason why Tommy was allowed another chance.

So he runs for them, runs for their sacrifice and runs for his future. He runs even when his legs burn because he has to find his family, he has to make sure they didn't die for nothing.

It's only later when he's far far away from the screaming and gunshots that he realizes that his chances of seeing his family are so much less now.

There's no one but him, no vehicle to bring him there faster and a map that he's gonna have to study.

The woods are dark and eerie, lonely and quiet. It's Tommy versus the monsters, just Tommy and his bag of things.

He keeps walking but stays as quiet as he can be until he sees a large enough hole in a tree that can fit him, that can keep him safe enough for the night.

Bending down he slowly crawls in, huddling in the farthest corner away from the opening and he shivers.

Tommy is nine years old and he isn't in his bed safe and warm, he's in a tree cold and crying.

There's no papa to come get him out the tree, no Wilbur to rescue him and no Techno to fight the monsters.

It's just Tommy, the tree, and Henry.

He falls asleep fast yet repeatedly throughout the night he wakes up to the slightest noise, he clutches his bag and Henry tighter each time trying to fall back asleep.

It's scarier at night he can't see who's coming, doesn't know what's coming. So he had to stay as quiet as possible just so nothing could hear him and snatch him away.

---

On the first day Tommy is terrified to leave his tree, the suns up yet he still feels like it's not safe. Eventually he forces himself out because he knows if he wants to see his family sooner he has to leave now.

The woods are beautiful during the day and if it wasn't for the fact that he's alone and people are evil now he would've played in them. But Tommy has to be a big kid now and follow the map, a map he barely understood.

"That's straight, and I'm going straight so-" He grumbles looking at the map like it's his worst enemy.

"I can stop here, Sun valley is a dumb name for the town, and I can keep moving after I get sleep!" Talking to himself was never fun, but if he imagined someone else was talking who was gonna judge? No one because no one was there, that doesn't make him laugh like he wished it did.

He walks on and on, silently cheering when he finally gets out the wood's and sees the small town on the map, but it's so quiet and abandoned and he tries to not gag when he smells something dead or when he sees blood silently praying he doesn't see a dead body he couldn't handle that anymore.

It's nowhere near as big as his home town, but there's enough here to help him out especially when he sees a market store and his stomach rumbles with hunger. So he knows where he's heading first, getting enough snacks and drinks to keep him going and then he should find a resting place.

The first thing he sees when he gets there is the door busted open, glass everywhere as if someone was rushing to get in *or get out he won't ever know*. He steps past all the glass and listens as it crushes under his foot taking in the store, there's water still stocked up and he sees his favorite bag of chips hanging on itself which cheers him up plenty.

He rushes around gathering a huge load of snacks, finding another bag to put all his findings in and he feels like it's just another trip to the grocery store. Except this time Phil can't control what he can and can't get, meaning Tommy can get all the sweets he pleased. His brothers would be so jealous of him and he's gonna laugh when they realize how much fun he's had with his wonderful snacks.

*"When it comes down to it, make sure you ration what you have. Be wise with what you get."* Techno's voice echoes in his ear after he placed an entire box of almond chocolates in his bag. But Tommy deserves a little treat for this entire event.

"Oh my god they have comic books-" He squeals out running towards the books excitedly, yet the second he gets closer he notices something beside them and pauses.

There's notebooks just sitting there waiting for someone to grab them, maybe for school or recipes. Maybe someone wanted to write random things in it, it's a useless thing but Tommy finds himself walking towards it.

He remembers when Phil would buy a shit load of notebooks before school started, how the man walked in with three filled bags of just notebooks and they would groan at the sight. Notebooks meant school and none of them liked the reminder that summer was over, but Tommy wonders if he would ever see Phil walk in with the bags ever again.

He picks up a blue one and twists it around, scrunching his nose up when he feels the paper and realizes one thing. The notebook is like one of those cheap ones you bought at a bad store, one that Tommy hates with his entire being. The paper was too soft for his liking and always ripped easier, the entire thing felt wrong in his hands whenever he held one just like now.

The notebook is something Tommy knew Phil would still buy him because his father was funny like that. It's dirty and he knows the paper is gonna suck, knows if this was in any other situation he would have tossed it right at Phil's head. He would have thrown a tantrum probably as his dad laughed before pulling out the good notebook and telling Tommy his face was funny as he did every time.

Each time Tommy fell for it, each time his dad would laugh.

He could put it down and forget it exists, he doesn't even need the thing. He only needs drinks and food, not paper that sucked ass. *But he imagines Phil handing it to him, imagining his dad laughing as he stares in shock.*

The book is placed in his bag along with two stolen cases of mechanical pencils because he isn't gonna get all the bad things like the wooden ones. Just this once he's gonna allow the notebook to be used just so he could have something to talk with.

With a filled bag Tommy marches out the store looking at the abandoned wreckage of a town, and he heads towards a small motel that he's decided would be his home for the night. It's easy to steal a key for a room but god did it smell horrible in the lobby, a backroom had a small pool of blood slipping from under the door and Tommy knew he was gonna avoid that with his entire being.

When he does end up finding his room he blocks the windows and locks the door before pushing a couch towards it just to be safe, it's dark in the room and when he tried turning on the lights it didn't work, the TV wouldn't even turn on and Tommy hates it.

"So now I have to get used to the dark huh." He whispers up at the ceiling once he crawls onto the bed just to test how soft it was. Groaning when it felt like cardboard.



He takes a look at the map when he finds a spot that has enough sun leaking through and plans his next move, which sounds funny and cool in his head like he's in a movie. If this was a movie it meant Tommy was the cool main character who got to do cool things, like stay up past his bedtime because no one could tell him off.

*No one could tell him off...*

Once he finished with the map he reluctantly pulled out the notebook ripping the plastic from the mechanical pencils so he could get one, and he stares down at the blank pages with a sorrowful look.

*Day one of my cool adventure*

*I got to get my favorite snacks, dad can't tell me off for it cuz he didn't even get to see and that's really funny. But I'm saving them up cuz I don't wanna run out fast if I have to walk a lot.*

*It's just me though, I don't think anyone lived in the car. Or maybe some did and they ran away and left us behind, I don't know and don't care. But the gun person promised me they would bring me back to my family, they lied and now i'm alone. I don't think I've ever had someone die for me before, I hate the feeling of knowing someone did.*

*It's not very nice knowing you've killed someone all because you existed at the wrong moment.*

*Is it bad that I wish one of them was in the car with me? Even if we all got really hurt I still would have had someone, or maybe they would've died. I just want them back.*

*I hate writing in this book, if it could read this I want it to know it sucks. Really really sucks and I wanna throw it into a pond.*

*I hate it.*

Tommy slams the book down when the first tear drips onto the pages, throwing it in his bag before rushing into the bed once more. He crushed Henry in his hold as he tried so hard to imagine his family was in the room laughing, on a vacation in a really fancy hotel that had so many cool snacks.

Tommy is able to sleep better this time, but he wakes up alone.

---

Wilbur bounces nervously on the bench as they all watch the cars pull in, waiting for a small blonde to rush at them with hopeful speed. They even had two soldiers checking each car that pulled in just to see which one Tommy was in.

“You think he got placed in the last one maybe?” Techno asks Phil once the tenth car pulled in the gates, watching as some reunite with others with envy.

Phil shrugs keeping a careful eye in the crowd, “Chances are likely, if he did then that's such a Tommy thing huh. Making us wait until it's the right moment.” Phil says jokingly as they all laugh small at the joke.

But then the rest of the cars pull in, Each being checked and no guard pulls out Tommy. There's no shout of any of their names or little feet rushing at them, Wilbur watches the gates close with a fearful look.

“Dad?”

They see a group of guards talking amongst each other, some shaking their heads and others looking at the gates and Wilbur feels his heart drop when two of them look in their direction. Tommy was just waiting for his big entrance.

Phil gets up quickly rushing at the guards with a firm, “Stay right here.” at him and Techno. They both look at each other with wide eyes before turning back at the sight of their dad running at the guards.

They watch as Phil is told something that sends the man on his knees, watch as some give Phil a pat on his back and as Phil seemingly begs them for something only to cry louder when he gets a shake of a head.

“Techno- Techno why is he-” Wilbur sputters, grabbing his teens hand tightly as they watch Phil sob.

Techno shakes harshly, “I don’t know, I don’t know Wil.” he gets out even though he sounds near tears.

*They both know the only reason Phil was reacting like that was because something horrible happened.*

When Phil does come back both of them are pulled into a tight hug as Phil whispers apologies over and over in each ear. Holding them as if letting go meant they would never see each other again, and they cried together at the meaning.

“Tommy’s car, something happened with it and-” Phil shudders pausing as he tries to not throw up, “Apparently it crashed and when they went to look no one, no one was alive when they looked.” He finishes with a sob and all of their hearts crack.

“He’s not dead, Tommy isn’t dead dad.” Wilbur croaks out begging for a lie.

But Phil shakes his head looking at the gates, Wilbur feels Techno lurch down but he keeps looking at his dad.

“Tommy wasn’t found at all in the crash, everything he had was gone including a map. Tommy wasn’t found dead.” Phil whispers making Techno lookup as well.

Tommy wasn't found dead and that gives Wilbur hope.

*But he also wasn't found alive, a voice whispers cruelly, they didn't find him breathing.*

"Tommy made it out alive, he had to have made it out that crash breathing. And I swear to god he's coming home alive." Techno interrupts their thoughts as he stands up from the bench with a fierce glare at the fences and gates.

"Tommy wouldn't give up like that, he's still out there."

*Alone and afraid, injured and near death. Wilbur hears the voice laugh as he's forced to imagine it. But If Tommy wasn't found, if a body wasn't found, it meant he had to have left alive and breathing.*

Wilbur knows one thing now: They will bring him back home alive and safe.

---

It's been a week now and yes Tommy's been keeping count, the notebook helps him know how long it's been because he writes it in at every chance he gets.

a week of walking and running following directions and a week of sleeping in whatever he found. On the third night he broke into a house and slept in some girl's room he wouldn't get to know. *He also sees the family sitting dead in the kitchen and he doesn't want to question how they died. So he avoided the kitchen until he left.*

On the fourth he sleeps in the woods, trying to make a makeshift tent out of leaves and sticks like he saw on TV. It barely works as a cover so he ended up sleeping in a tree only to fall out in the morning. *He writes about how much he hated going camping when he was*

*younger, how he would've done anything if it meant his dad was here to show him how to build a tent again.*

A full week of watching people he would never know walk as corpses that he would throw up at the sight until there was nothing left to lose. A week of wondering when he would be able to run into his dad's arms once again. An entire week goes by and he is barely close to his goal. The map tells him there's so many other places he has to pass first before he gets to the big X where his family was meant to be.

*Day ten I think?*

*I saw a dog today but it ran away when I tried calling it. We had a dog once but it left when i was a baby, I think they would've liked having another dog if i brought one back. I know I'd like one now for company.*

*I think I'm starting to get used to the dead people. I don't throw up anymore when I see one but I do have to run. One almost grabbed me today but it got stuck like the stupid thing it is.*

*I'm getting there though. The map says so, kind of. My birthday's soon and I really hope I can get back to them before then. If i keep walking and don't rest I probably could.*

*But I'm really tired and being tired isn't helpful when people are trying to hurt you, so I don't think I'll do that.*

*Bye Bye though I have to move again.*

His legs are cut up and bruised, Phil would throw a fit when he saw his legs. He's also really dirty and he feels his hair matted with dirt and dried up blood. At one point he had the chance to wash himself in a lake but it was so cold and he hated it.

He goes through a lot of towns, sees a lot of sights and steals whatever he can get. Avoids the mean people and gasps when he sees a duck waddling by at some points. He breaks into homes or buildings and rests in them if they're safe, sometimes he's rushed out when a dead person is there.

He kills his first one by accident by pushing it out a window, he cries when he does that because he never thought he would've had to kill someone before. It's not the best feeling and Tommy couldn't leave out the front of the building because of it.

He sleeps in the woods sometimes and even slept under a bridge twice which was fun. He pretends he's a hero at some points and at one point got a sketchbook which he doodles in from time to time. But no matter the fun he gets at some points, he's still alone.

Tommy ended up finding a rock which he scribbled a mean face on, now he has Henry and Clarence to chat with when he gets really bored.

*"And when Techno gets to see you you can go to him because he collects cool rocks, You'll be well loved!" He whispers to Clarence on the first night he has them.*

*"But I have to be your favorite though, ok? I'll throw you in the pond if you change your mind."*

Needless to say things are going swell, amazing. Horrible and downright cruel, no matter what he gets or how much fun he has it will never be enough for him now. Not when his family is so far away and no one can hold him when he cries. No one to tell him off when he does something dangerous like sitting on top of a building, it's stupid that he wants his dad to scold him just one more time.

But then the dreaded day comes, he walks slowly into the newest neighborhood as the sun slowly falls down to sleep and he knows what day is coming once the moon hits Its highest point.

Tommy turns ten tomorrow and he isn't close to the safe zone, there's not gonna be a cake tomorrow or his birthday hugs. Wilbur won't burst in his room singing happy birthday to wake him up and Techno won't wear the dumb hat that makes Tommy giggle.

Phil won't grab him into a big hug and tell him how big he's getting. They won't drive down to the bowling alley and he won't be the center of attention. No one can brag about his party if it doesn't exist. He can't become the coolest kid in his class if he isn't even having his party anymore. And it hurts because Tommy was so excited.

Now there's an abandoned bowling alley that won't have any screaming children in it, there's a birthday cake waiting for someone who won't ever come pick it up and it'll rot into nothing. There's a home that's silent because its owners up and left, a school that's dead and bloody. A family who's separated and a lonely nine year old.

He finds a fancy house this time, a large one that Tommy imagines his family would have lived in if Phil was super rich. Tommy finds a boy's room this time and imagines it's his room when he lays down in the bed. His house and his bed, Dad's down the hallway and the twin's room was beside his.

*"Goodnight love." Phil whispers in his hair as he presses a soft kiss on his forehead making Tommy giggle.*

He bundles into the blankets with a soft smile, "Night dad.." He whispers back to something that isn't there and he falls asleep to a world that he wishes was real.

Brothers picking him up, party streamers flying around and large presents waiting for him to open. A father carrying the most beautiful cake in the world that's all for Tommy, his perfect world.

Tommy was a nine year old when this started. He's a nine year old that falls asleep believing it's his real home, He's nine years old when his world was forced to start over and he was nine years old when he expected to be with his family.

Tommy started as a nine year old believing his world was just beginning, that his family was gonna stay next to him forever until the earth called for him back. A child who never expected the worst of the world, a child who was ready to grow up.

Tommy wakes up Ten years old to no one but himself. No one barges in his room screaming about his birthday and when he walks down the large stairs no ones waiting for him. There's no birthday breakfast made by a loving father or another brother waiting to make him laugh.

He's ten years old and he's alone.



# For those we lost we pray on your soul

## Chapter Summary

Tommy learns slowly how cruel the world is getting, meanwhile 3/4 sbi plan to destroy the government because they can.

Fun all around huh

## Chapter Notes

**((TW: Murder, blood, threats of violence, injuries, guns, suicidal thoughts, amputation but dw its a minor character, just beware this is a kinda dark chapter overall.))**

Again this is a fanfic and nothing is actually real in it! You are safe and you are okay <3 remember to eat and drink children smh

My goal is 8k each chapter so things are rushed in at the pace i wanted so it isn't slow or fast at all. At least that's what I'm hoping for lolol.

shameless promo but this is my twitter [https://mobile.twitter.com/Idespisemilk\\_](https://mobile.twitter.com/Idespisemilk_) :D I'm gonna be posting what i imagine what people look like in this au and updates so lets goo

ANYWAY my back hurts but i gotta feed the children so here you go, time to work on the third one

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil has never wanted to cause harm to someone as bad as he did now, once he had to control himself when a lady tried calling Techno some not so nice words over his hair and even then it was hard. But if he thought the rage he felt then was bad?

This one must be a fucking field day.

“I’ve *heard* what you’ve had to say, I’ve listened to it on repeat.” The man groans, *The supposed leader of this zone which Wilbur calls bullshit on*, “You and your kids are like a

fuckin' broken tape deck, repeating on and on about something I could care less for!"

Phil twists his fist trying to hold himself back from punching the man straight on the nose. Instead he chooses to talk, "If you heard me you would be doing something about it! My kid is out there alone for all I know, a kid that was supposed to be brought here *safe* . Instead of helping us, you laze around and tell me there's nothing you can do!" He shouts, narrowing his eyes at the bored look the man gives.

A piece of shit is what Phil calls him, a powered crazed bastard who picks favorites. They've been here for almost three weeks now under the rule of a man that didn't deserve that power. No one was allowed out the gates unless they wanted to never come back, and Phil wishes he could've gone if it wasn't for the fact that if he left he would have to leave his other two sons. There wasn't a world where Phil would have put them out there for death to grasp and drag, losing one son was enough for him.

Phil couldn't leave his sons when they needed him right now.

But no matter how much he pleaded or how much he begged for them to search for Tommy he's brushed away and told it's not safe to risk lives for one child who was probably dead and decayed. *But Phil saw the cigarettes that the man was risking lives for, saw the beer be dragged in just because the man said so. He's seen others starve and work for nothing while the man lives in glory. The walls and guns may keep them safe, but inside they were dying under the hand of a selfish man.*

"Listen man there is nothing I can do for you, all I can do is tell you to stop asking me. Accept the fact that the kid's dead, a twelve year old can't survive in this shit." He laughs, sinking back into his chair while Phil looks down right pissed. "It's how the world works now, you die or you live. Nothing in between."

The father feels his heart crack under the cruel weight of the words thrown at him.

"He's ten." Phil whispers into the cold air solemnly.

Some of the guards look over at Phil, The man doesn't even look bothered at the correction.

“He’s ten years old, he was nine when I lost him. My son is out there, a *child* is out there. He isn’t twelve he’s fucking ten.” Phil spats, taking a warning step forward, he notices no one moves to stop him.

The man had the nerve to try and hide how nervous he got, and had the nerve to look down at Phil like he was nothing but dirt under an old boot.

“Then the chances of him surviving are less.” He dismisses waving a hand away at Phil, not even watching as one of the guards slowly pulls him out.

*Phil was gonna kill him. He was gonna murder that bastard with everything he had, make a better place for Tommy to come home to. He knows people would help him, he’s seen and he’s heard. He took in who would try and stop him, judged reactions on things he said.*

*That man wouldn't stand a chance, Phil was gonna bring his son home.*

When he’s gently pushed out the doors he’s met with his two twins looking at him with hope, hope that maybe finally they’ve listened to them. But Phil smiles at them, he could explain on the way to their new home.

They would crush that man with an iron fist no matter what it took. When Phil has to walk around and see this sad broken place full of people being casted away because a man deemed them not good enough? it’s enough for him to know it’s what needs to be done.

There wasn’t enough to make an army to protect that man once Phil got the word out.

---

Tommy never got the chance to understand how maps work, he was sick during the week they were being taught it. It wasn’t his fault, he couldn't help when he was and wasn't sick!

But now he wishes he could blame himself, if he had just sucked it up and went maybe he could have understood it better.

Because Tommy took one look at a sign to the newest town and another at the map. He got lost, made the wrong move and now he's in a town that puts him back far from his main destination. It's enough to make him almost scream, key word on the almost.

He still forgets this world had bad people walking around, forgets they can hear him if he's loud and chases him until he gets away. He ended up getting in the habit of biting under his lip to keep quiet and when he last looked in a mirror he noticed it was bruising.

Phil was gonna mother-hen him so hard over that if he doesn't stop. *He doesn't stop, he wants his dad to care for him no matter how overboard it is he just wants that feeling back.*

So now Tommy has to turn back around and pay better attention to where he's going yet he's so tired of walking. At one point he had tried driving a car once he realized the owners left the keys in it.

Now there's a new part in his notebook that tells what happened.

### *HI AGAIN NOTEBOOK*

*I got to tell you, I don't like driving all that much, probably cuz I've never actually learned how to but it looked so easy! Not my fault my legs hurt and the person left the keys for me to get anyway.*

*There was blood in the backseat though, so I don't know if they left willingly or not but I hope they're ok.*

*Anyway that car is dead now, I don't recommend driving when 1: you don't know how and 2: You can't see past the wheel. I ended up getting really dizzy when I hit the car in front of it,*

*but then I had to run because it was all making loud noises and the monsters heard it.*

*So I'm stuck walking, i tried riding a bike i found but it ended up hurting my legs more.*

*I hate cars.*

So yeah, Tommy isn't having fun anymore. Snacks don't give him that same spark and toys are useless since he can't play long with them. He did however find a hair brush, he's pretty sure Dad had his, so now his hair isn't all tangled up. Just incredibly dirty no matter how many times he dunks it under water it's still gross.

He doesn't get to talk much anymore either, only small whispers to Clarence and Henry during the night when he's inside and the occasional chatter when he knows it's safe outside. No use talking when no one answers back, all you get is silence or the monsters responding.

He hates when he hears them respond with the scary groaning.

But he's discovered being by himself is safer in his eyes. Safe with himself because he can't be hurt or tossed out, no one can raise a gun at him if it's just him.

Tommy had seen a group once a few days back, he even had half a mind of asking them for help because who wouldn't help a kid? He thought they could've helped him, he would've been useful too. They even looked the same age as his brothers, maybe a tad bit older but still.

He had been in a tall building when he saw them walking the streets below, it took one look out the window and suddenly he thought he had hope. Seeing them walk together on the lookout? It looked safe for him to try. But the second he goes to open the window, he sees them throw rocks and fallen bricks into windows. He sees them laughing at another teen who curled into themselves when they saw the damage being done around them, as if the teen didn't wanna be there.

Only then does Tommy realize something wasn't right.

Tommy sees this group pull a gun on them like it's nothing, he hears the shot go off and watches the teen fall without a fight. He witnesses the murder as they run leaving the body behind for the dead. They killed a human like it was ok, they left them there without guilt.

Tommy won't ever understand why they did that, he won't ever understand what pushed them towards that path. All he does is bite his lip hard until it bleeds just so he won't scream and he cries.

He didn't leave that building for three days out of pure fear that they were still out there. Waiting for another poor victim to mess with because they could. Waiting for Tommy to walk out thinking it's safe only to pull a gun on him as well.

When he does leave he makes a small grave for the teen, picks dying flowers to place on it and a small rock that he wrote on. He didn't know their name, didn't know anything about them either. But he makes them a grave just to let them have some kind of respect.

He knows he would've wanted that if he died.

In the book he writes a small part dedicated to that person, a small reminder that they did exist in this world. A part that tells someone else they were a person so they wouldn't be forgotten.

Tommy wants them to have a story.

*I hope you can be happier now, he will write . I hope you won't hurt anymore either, I tried my best to make your grave pretty. Sorry I couldn't put you in it, I don't like seeing dead people though. But it's ok cuz now you don't have to worry anymore, you can be free now right?*

*I wish I could be free, but I don't want freedom if it means that's the only way to get it. Hope you can find rest now. Sorry I couldn't do more.*

The ten year old will walk safer and more vigilant, he will watch out more and keep away from people. He would rather be alone on his way to his family if it meant he could stay alive longer. No matter how much he craves for another human to talk with, no matter how much he cries for someone.

Tommy's staying alone just so he can survive.

Sometimes...sometimes he wishes he died in that crash. It would've been so much more better than this, he wouldn't be hurting and wouldn't have to see these torturous images all the time. Tommy could be in heaven happy and safe watching over his family. He could float in the clouds and know he won't have to hurt again, get the best sleep in the world and wake up without fear.

Tommy wouldn't have to see dead people.

There's been a few times where he wonders if this was for nothing, the possibilities that his brothers were dead and his father along with them. That Tommy could be hurting for nothing, they could be watching him begging for him to lay down and sleep. He could get to the X on the map and find out they never made it in.

*Tommy almost allowed himself to have that sleep, a monster got really close and he didn't wanna run anymore. He just wanted to finally rest, and he almost did.*

He ran away though in the end, the fear of dying overtook it all. The fear that his family was alive and waiting for something that had to come- It hurt. No matter how tired he is, no matter how much he wishes he could stop and go away he keeps walking. He kept moving his feet and breaking into things, he kept watch on everything around him and moved forward.

*Day something? I don't know anymore. I think I got a day wrong. I just know it's past my birthday, that it's been a while.*

*I wonder if it's even April still. I did see a calendar in a store but I was scared to look. I dunno why but I don't wanna see it be past April, I like thinking it's only been a few days.*

*I saw a burned house today. I dunno why someone burned down their home but I guess it's not my problem. Still confusing though, I've only seen a burned house on TV.*

*Wilbur said he had a friend that lost their home to a fire once, he told me he even saw it on flames. When I asked why I didn't remember it he told me I wasn't old enough to remember. I can remember things now, Wilbur, suck on that.*

*You guys are gonna be so jealous at everything I see, I just know it. It's like when papa took us on vacations, all the different sites we could see. Except this time it's just me seeing things.*

*Alone.*

---

He finally got back on the right path again, though it took a few days which he hated badly. Moments where he had to duck and run when he saw something walking, turning around to go a different way when he heard voices.

But there's something Tommy discovered one night.

Tommy, at some point during another stop for the night, realizes because he's alone he can say whatever he pleases. Anything he could say wouldn't have a consequence, the blonde had the power of words now and that seems like the best thing for him. No older brothers or dads could stop him, no teachers or friends to scold him.

No one could stop him.



So he opens his mouth big and wide and shouts, “FUCK!” as loud as he can feeling brave for once.

In the room he listened as it echoed slightly bouncing off the walls grinning ear to ear. There's no one to tell him off, Tommy can cuss now and get away with it and he laughs. Nothing can get in because Tommy blocked the door, no one could hurt him if he yelled for once.

He laughs and he cheers, it's the funniest thing that's happened to him lately.

He pretends he hears his dad start scolding him, ready to turn around and immediately put on the sad *I'm-sorry* act. But when he turns around smiling ready to show someone he said it, no one's behind him.

It's the worst thing that happens to him, his grin slowly morphs into a grimace when he realizes, That of course there is no dad shouting at him to watch his mouth. No brothers who gasp and start saying they were gonna tell, no friends who look at him like he was a bug that caused them mortal pain. Tommy can say whatever he wants now

And there's no one there to tell him off. How fun is that? That he can say anything and everything and no one can tell him to stop.

No one can shout, “*Shut up Tommy!*” OR “*I'm gonna tell if you do it again.*”

Maybe if it was different, he would've been prouder, but for him there's no point in it. He doesn't cuss again for that entire night. The fun was sucked out of it and the room grew somber.

There's a note made for his father in the book now, he cried when he wrote it.

*Dad if when you see this I said a bad word, so you should get onto me when you see it ok?  
And then after i get in trouble you'll give me that I'm not mad at you anymore hug right?*

*You have to, that's what dads do. They show you what's good and bad, but they still care  
about you no matter what you do.*

*You'll be there when I need you. I know it.*

“You’ll be there, you promised it.” He whispers breaking in his words at the book, closing it softly.

He can’t dwell on that grief for long and soon he falls asleep on a cold floor. Henry was there to keep watch while he slept, and maybe he imagined it was Techno keeping watch instead. No one would have to know it, no one has to know how much he was hurting.

That’s Tommy's secret, no one else has to know.

---

Phil wakes up to a million voices downstairs, a bunch of people he didn’t invite were downstairs in his home. So that told him already that his day wasn’t gonna be good one bit. So he forces himself off the hard bed, slipping on his green slippers that he refused to leave behind. *It was his last father's day gift from his kids, he wouldn't ever leave it behind.*

“What the hell is going-” Phil starts the second he walks down the crooked stairs pausing when he sees a group of people in his house.

He see’s Wilbur look sheepish, sending him a nervous wave once he sees his father.

Phil’s face blanks, “I wasn’t aware you wanted to invite people for a gathering today *Wil* .” he mumbles giving his son the, *“This is gonna be discussed later”* look .

“That’s because it was a last minute thing dad.” Techno pipes up, moving across the crowd of people. “Say hi to your followers, old man.” He grins out, watching as Phil looks a tad bit shocked.

A boy in a dirty green hoodie that looked torn at the end of his sleeves groaned at that, “We agreed to not call us that Techno.” He says though Phil hears the smile in his words.

He sees that boy, another wearing a blue shirt looking tired with a smaller black-haired boy hiding behind him. There’s someone he knew who worked in the medical parts here, a young faded pink-haired lady that gave out her rations to others beside a curly haired woman. Two other boys hanging on the hiding one, a man wearing what Phil assumed as a gas mask and a taller guy who looked *oddly* happy. *Phil almost blanched at the shark hat the guy was wearing, but beggars can’t be choosers.*

There’s a lot of people in here, that was only a few he noticed. *He also sees the furniture he was given isn’t anywhere to be seen to make more room, that’s another thing he frowns at.*

Coughing he straightens his posture up, “I’m afraid I don’t understand what’s happening here.” He says with a friendly smile, shifting on the stairs as what felt like a thousand eyes looked up at him.

The curly haired woman stepped up, grinning at Phil with large determination.

“We are your army, see your two young boys pulled all this together and almost everyone here hates that bastard up the hill.” She speaks, waving her hands around the group, “I’ve seen you go up there everyday since we got here, I’ve seen you come out devastated and I’ve seen people I care for hurt themselves because of him.”

Phil starts to know what this was, he sends another look at his boys who grin at him as well and feels his heart warm at the thought of what they did.

Looking back at the woman he grows just as determined as everyone in this house.

“You wanted to make a place for your son to come home to, and We want a place to be safe in. This is your army, your new friends, and your allies.” She finishes as the group starts chattering around them.

Phil...Phil feels warmed that these people were ready to risk their lives for him, that these people looked to him for help. So maybe the scolding he prepared can wait, Phil has a world to create now. A home and a safe place for others, maybe Phil can't make everything go back to normal now sure. But that doesn't mean he can't make sure things can be less harsh on everyone either.

“Then I guess we should start planning.” He answers back, sealing their fate, and he won't ever look back. He's positive neither will any of them, this is a future on the line after all.

*You'll come back to us and you'll see the place we will create for you Tom's, you'll be able to grow up again. With your brothers and me, I promised I'd make this place safe for you.*

When he steps down the stairs he realizes another thing, It's not just Tommy that can grow up in a good environment. There's families like his that can finally be safe and not worry, teenagers like his sons that can defend and yet still be teens. Children who can play in the streets and not worry about crooked rulers or walls that could crumble over one wrong move.

This wasn't something light he was playing with, this was people's lives he held in his hands. This was a future that he would control if he did the right thing. This was a big move to make, and he will take that leap no matter what.

---

*I think I'm gonna find a calendar today, I gotta be braver and if I can't even look at a simple calendar then I can't do anything else right?*

*I promise when I reach the next town I'll look for one, for now I have to find a good place in the woods again. I got to say I hate sleeping in the woods, it's scarier and gross.*

*I used to like sleeping in them, Papa hated it though. He would always get worried cuz I'd miss curfew by oversleeping and then they would have to come find me, I'm still waiting.*

*But I did get to play in the water today. I tried to even catch a fish like in the movies with my bare hands but all I got was wet hair and wet clothes. I don't like fish anymore.*

*I remember when I was six and Wilbur pushed me into the water at the lake papa took us too and I got really mad and started crying. Do you remember Wil? You ended up giving me all the s'mores so I wouldn't tell, we should make more s'mores again.*

*I really wanna go back there. When I find them I'm gonna ask papa if we can go, he will say yes cuz I'm awesome.*

*My day is still going on, I took a break cuz my legs hurt but it's ok I'll find a nice place to stay again. I wanna find another ground hole, live like a rabbit.*

*I gotta stop writing now. I'm hungry and really wanna eat, got to be strong so I can find them.*

Closing the book Tommy leans against the rough surface of the tree he claimed as his, the sun was still high in the air so he didn't have to worry about a short break, He could eat and drink in peace.

"I think I deserve the Doritos right, Henry?" Tommy questions reach in his bag for the blue one and a small water bottle, "You want one?"

Henry lays still in his lap, Tommy gives him a chip and smiles.

“I’d give one to you Clarence but you made fun of me earlier and bad kids don’t get snacks.” he huffs at the rock that stayed silently in his bag. He knew they weren’t real people, knew he was making up scenarios in his head just to feel a slight bit better.

He would keep doing it until he had a real talking friend.

Humming he sneakily steals Henry's chip and eats it, “What kind of tree should we attempt to sleep in if I can't find my dream home hm?”

Henry just stares at him with beady black eyes and Tommy gasps.

“You are so-” He stops to take a big gulp of water, “-right Henry! The biggest tree, that isn’t even hard to find, all the trees are big.”

He stops talking to finish his snack and drink, stretching his legs every now and then as he listens to the wood’s noises. If a branch snapped he immediately froze until nothing came after, if he heard a bird he would smile at it. Daily things he does.

Finally he gets up and puts everything into his bags, looking around just in case before he starts moving forward in the direction the map tells him to go.

He should be walking along the road, But the reason he went into the woods was because he saw a giant mass of them walking on the road bumping into abandoned cars. He immediately bolted into the woods and just followed the road, except in the woods far away from being seen.

“I think I can keep going until the sun sets, at least that way I won't waste a lot of time.” Mumbling to himself as he dodges thorns and bushes.

And that’s when he sees it, stopping in shock as if what was ahead wasn't even real.

There's a baby deer trotting around in the small opening in front of him, jumping up and down as if everything was new to it.

It's the coolest thing Tommy has ever seen and he's seen a lot of cool things recently but not a baby deer, that's next level cool.

He knows his brothers are gonna be so jealous when he tells them he got to see a baby deer. There's a slight hope that maybe he could even make the deer his friend. Phil would have to say yes to Tommy because Tommy's being a grown up until he finds papa. And he was told before if Tommy was a big kid he could get a pet. Big kid's survive on their own and he's been doing that.

So this means Tommy could get a pet deer.

He takes one step towards the deer, bright and hopeful. He was gonna name it Clementine and they were gonna be best friends, no monsters could get him cause they would see his deer and get scared. The deer kept jumping around, and soon Tommy could jump with it.

Then he sees the mama from the corner of his eye. He sees the baby deer being watched under his mama's gaze as she makes sure her baby is right where she can see it. And Tommy doesn't wanna take the baby away from their family, he knew the deer would be really sad if he did and it would feel so alone away from its parent.

He really wanted a deer friend..But he can't steal a baby away like that.

So Tommy turns around and he feels jealous over the deer. He wants to have his family watching him, only being a minute away and making sure he's safe. Tommy wants to play and know he can run right into their arms at the smell of danger.

But Tommy cant play, there's no one to keep him safe if he does. He doesn't have a mama deer or a papa deer like the baby did, no deer siblings to start kicking with harsh hooves if he was hurt, he's jealous.

*I found a rabbit hole, I couldn't fit in it though so I guess no dream home for the night. I have to sleep in another tree and I hate it. I want my bed and my house, I want my comfort blankets and my comfortable pajamas that papa makes me wear.*

*I hate them for leaving me behind, I hate papa and I hate Wilbur and techno and that stupid car and that stupid soldier. I hate these stupid trees and this stupid map, I hate Henry and Clarence.*

*I hate myself.*

There's nothing else he can write after that, the only thing left is a big ripped part in the page as if the one writing it broke, maybe he did.

He barely sleeps that night.

---

Phil watches with a blank face as the man screams and cries before him, bloody and missing a limb because of Techno. Slowly moving towards the man who begs and pleads for his life, a coward's life.

“Please- Please I’ll send someone to look for the damn kid! Just please fucking leave me alone!” He cries as Phil gains closer, “I’ll make you high up in the roles! Special privileges and everything, Is that what you want?”

He screams when Phil digs his foot into his stomach, Phil wonders if they've all lost their minds. No one sane lets their sons fight others, no one sane lets one slice off someone's limb. No one sane fights in a war during a damn apocalypse.

“This is some power move isn’t it? You just wanna feel powerful huh? A weak father who can’t keep his own kids safe so he hurts others because they wouldn’t do his stupid job?” He taunts resorting to hurt with words when he realizes Phil wouldn't fall for his other tricks. “A



weak man that's all you'll ever be, getting others to destroy something because you wanna be selfish!”

Phil scoffs aiming the gun at the mans head, “I wasn’t the selfish one in this, I didn’t deny people food or work them to death and I sure as hell didn’t send others out risking their lives for stupid useless items!” he answers back watching as the man shakes under the weight of a gun pointing at him.

*To take a life is the most difficult choice one could make.*

“I would’ve listened to my people, you know? If a father came to me daily begging for help I would help. You call me selfish but won’t look at yourself.” He continues putting a finger on the trigger, “I’m selfish for the right reasons, you were selfish for the wrong reasons. We aren’t the same, never will be either.”

*But once you've done it, it will become the most easiest task of them all.*

Phil isn’t sane, he won’t ever forget this and he can’t erase what he is about to do. Yes, no sane person does everything he’s done and they never will. Techno in another life will have never taken someone's limb and Wilbur will have never stabbed a man, Phil will have never killed a man and the others will have never risked their lives for this.

In that life Phil would have lived a normal life, Techno would be in the honor classes and Wilbur would have him drive to every audition in town. Tommy would have had his dream birthday and he would be home. In that perfect world they would be sane and normal, no blood covering their hands or death staining their eyes.

But that isn’t this world, and Phil isn’t a sane man anymore. He pulls the trigger even as the man begs, he doesn’t flinch at the horrible scene beneath him and he doesn't throw up.

“I’m something better than what you were, I don’t cheat my way in life and I fight for the right things. Even if I have to do wrong things like this, even if I lose my mind along the way.” Phil whispers crouching down at the body that can’t ever move again, “I am a father

and I am a lost mind, they are humans who need to survive and you were the threat. We will never *ever* be the same.”

Phil walked in that building a man who has never harmed or killed another, he walked in these gates a scared and distressed father who lost himself along the way. Phil leaves that building bloody and torn looking among those who picked the winning side as they cheer when he walks out alone and alive.

He sees his sons who look older and tired, no longer does he see two little boys who never knew the dark that played in this world, boys who weren't touched by it's cruelty. He sees his son's changed and grown, and he hugs them with everything he had left to give.

“We just have to find Tommy now, Right?” Wilbur whispers in his dad's shoulder, leaning all his weight onto the man.

Techno hums allowing himself the same comfort, “That's the plan since we finished the other one.”

Phil laughs at them, shaking his head as he looks at the sun that glowed on them all. “We can bring him home now, nothing to hold us back.”

Dream, he learned earlier the name of the same green clothed boy, walks up to them smiling bright. *He found out the boy had a younger brother named Tubbo, a boy only a year older than Tommy. Both their parents died before they even got in the cars. When Phil had the honor to meet Tubbo he saw Tommy for a second, Phil fought for the two as well.*

“We all have cars ready to go out and start a search, we all owe you that much.” Dream informs them waving a hand at Puffy who ran over laughing.

Puffy immediately bopped the boy on his head, Phil could see the women already claiming the two as her own sons, “We wanted to surprise you after everyone calmed down! But this knuckle head couldn't wait huh?” She teases pushing the younger boy away who giggles and Phil sends them both another smile.

“You all can rest before we start another adventure. This entire thing was stressful enough Puffy.” Phil sighs letting go of his sons who still cling to him.

All he gets is a nod from the woman, “And we will, but if you want that boy home soon then we have to get started right away huh? I know if it was me I'd already be running out those gates.”

Phil tilts his head, shooing the boys away, earning groans as he did, “So you've already organized groups I assume?”

“Yup Dream, me, George and Foolish along with Amy are going in one car.” She turns around pointing out all the groups that were heading out.

“Sam and some of that man's bodyguards are heading for the farthest town, so they'll be gone longer but Sam made a good point about Tommy being farther away. Us going to the closer towns are just a precaution, if Sam comes back empty handed we go farther.” Stating as they both wave at the masked man who Phil learned was kind but strong, *He takes in how nervous and skittish the others in the mans group were, but he brushes it off as last minute nerves.*

“And if he doesn't come back?” Phil questions watching as the woman frowns.

“Then we search for a boy and a few bodies.” She sighs, running a hand through her hair.

“I think for now, if you don't mind me suggesting, you and your sons stay here.” Putting a finger up when Phil goes to reject it she keeps on, “If anything goes wrong for any of us and you all got caught up in it that boy will come here with no one left for him. You can disagree and go, but I'm thinking of a smarter choice here.”

Phil stops silently, frowning in thought as he goes through anything he could plan. Puffy wasn't wrong, if things went south and they got caught up with it Tommy would be forever alone, orphaned in a harsh world.

“If each of you comes back with nothing, if the last group comes back with nothing. I’m driving out those gates and I’m looking for my son.” Commanding, not trying to change his mind about it Puffy relaxes and nods.

“Your son’s gonna come home Phil.” She says patting his back before rushing back to her friend.

He knows that, he knows Tommy was coming back to them.

Phil turns to his own family and leaves the past of who he once was behind.

He came in those gates an innocent man, and he stayed in there a stained one.

---

It’s not safe, this town wasn’t safe. He discovers that when he sees a group of people searching around and immediately runs to hide.

Grunting he lifts himself over a wall fast, he almost got caught by a group of people this time. They were looking for something, he doesn’t know what but he knows they want to find something out here.

Five days since he stopped writing in his book, five days since he said he hated everything and five days of slow sluggish walking. He ended up finding that calendar, April ended a long time ago, he finds out. Judging it by the days he wrote down he thinks he’s in May.

But now Tommy has to wait more. All because the scary people wanted something, sure they didn’t see them but they were still out there looking. He didn’t wanna die, he didn’t want

them to hurt him or find him even if it wasn't him being looked for.

They looked kind but Tommy learned that kind people don't mean much anymore now, one of them had a cool sword though *and Tommy will swear on his life that they didn't have an arm* . But Tommy knew better, so he crawled under a vent he saw and he stayed. He stays when they walk past and he sees a lady with really pretty hair that had flowers twisted in them looking around, he stays when she walks into a building only to walk out dejected. He stays when they group up and he stays when he hears vehicles leave.

When he finally crawls back out, Tommy wonders what they were searching for.

Shrugging that thought away he walks into the building to find something useful, he forgets about them later.

*I found more chocolate today. Someone was out here looking for something but I dunno what.*

*Maybe it's like a scavenger hunt, Techno you remember how you would always make the coolest ones for me? Do you think that's what they were doing?*

*Are you guys looking for me?*

*I'm looking for you.*

*Please be looking for me, it'll make everything easier for me. Or do you think I'm a monster now? I'm not. I hope you guys know that. I've been really really careful.*

*Are you guys monsters? I don't wanna see it if you are, which I hope none of you are.*

*Wilbur would look really funny as a monster though, he dressed up as one once remember? Though his compared to the real ones won't make the same thing. I saw one without a*

*stomach and puked, Wilbur had his stomach.*

*This feels like a long one huh? Maybe cuz I don't wanna move right now, my legs really really hurt guys. They look bruised and swollen so i think my break is gonna take awhile, sorry for making you all wait longer.*

*Why couldn't we have just stayed home?*

*I didn't mean it when I said I hated you guys. I really didn't, I was really mad. I'm sorry. I mean it.*

*I wanna go to bed now, night I think. Doesn't matter if I write it you guys won't hear or see it huh.*

Staring up at the ceiling with tired blue eyes he wonders, what if they did stay home? Would they still be together?

Huffing he turns to his side, "I'm a big kid, big kid's don't worry. I'm a big kid, big kids don't whine. I'm a big kid, I'm okay." He chants under his arm over and over.

"I'm a big kid, I'm not alone. I'm a big kid, I'm- I'm here."

Tomorrow when he wakes up he makes the big decision of heading backwards, finding a different path and not going the way the others went. It sucks but it's safer, he can find another road that they won't be around and he won't run into them. Maybe it's stupid, maybe it's the wrong decision but he's young and he doesn't know when to give up. But in his mind he thinks running the opposite way keeps him alive.

He doesn't wanna be the next grave some unfortunate soul will have to make, he won't be the monster's dinner either. Won't have cruel hands pull him apart for existing, Besides he isn't really that close to the X yet, so turning backward won't do much harm.

*It'll add so much more time and waiting. Do you really wanna keep walking? Are you a coward, can't face a few humans? Are you picking the difficult path because you're scared of the truth Tommy? Is this fun for you, making others wait because you can't be a big kid?*

“I’m a big kid, I’m a big kid who needs to survive.” He answers back yet he doesn't even convince himself. “I’m doing what I can to live, that's what matters.”

So Tommy turns around and walks with a lowered head back to the wrong place, praying that he can get through this without having to run more. A big kid doesn't run in fear, a big kid runs with bravery.

Tommy isn't a big kid, and he hates admitting that with his burning bones and bruised limbs. He will never be a big kid, he knows the truth. Tommy is a baby and he isn't brave, he hates blood and he hates the smell of decay. He hates being alone just as he hates doing all the work. He hates that the world changed without asking him, hates that it was making him suffer like this.

Tommy meant it when he wrote about hating himself. He knows he meant it because he still felt that way, nothing could change it.

---

*I had to go back dad. I'm sorry, please don't hate me for that. There were people going in the direction I needed to go in so I had to change the path up, it'll take longer but I swear I'm trying.*

*I wish I could be braver for you, I wish I wasn't a baby. But I need to survive for you all right? So I didn't mess up with turning back, at least I knew the way this time. The map has another road I can take that'll put me in the same direction, just longer.*

*You got lost once by taking the wrong road, remember? Techno bullied you the entire time and we all had a lot of fun even though it took us longer to get back home. But it was fun*

*even though you got upset, so maybe I'll end up having fun too right? Except I did this on my own choice, sorry.*

*Can you guys still wait for me? Are you still waiting? Have you accepted that I wasn't coming home? Please don't, I am coming. I promise just please keep waiting for me. Please don't give up on me, it would make me cry you know.*

*We can go on more trips when i get back i swear, we can take the wrong road together this time.*

*I'm waiting for you guys too, everyday I think it'll be you guys who find me. Why haven't you? Are you really looking?*

*Sorry, I know it's wrong to get upset. We didn't pick this, I should've stayed with Wilby.*

*Sometimes I wish the crying lady got me.*

Again he closes the book and looks out at the pond in front of him, ducks would have been swimming here but he assumed they got scared and left.

“Quack, quack.” He whispers trying to cheer himself up. *Wilbur used to take him to the duck ponds and they would sit for hours imitating the duck sounds.* “Quack Henry c'mon.” Tommy asks, placing the cow in front of him.

“Imagine you're a duck instead of a cow, all you gotta do is quack.” he says giggling after he quacks again, “Imagine you got wings and you're super fluffy, you can fly too isn't that fun?”

“I think it's cool y'know, flying sounds awesome. I could go wherever I wanted, fly right into dad's arms too.” Whispering he lays down in the wet grass looking up at the sky, the clouds were grey so he knew it was gonna rain soon. Rain meant staying inside longer, rain meant thunder.



“Dad cooked a duck once, it was so gross and I cried when I ate it.” Squinting his eyes at the clouds he groans, “He ever brought that home again did he? I think he hated seeing me cry, so he swore off bringing home a duck for dinner.”

*Quack Quack.*

“Wilbur and Techno hated that though because they liked it, which was gross and bad of them you know. But I know they went with it because they didn't like seeing me cry either, I learned that crying got me anything.” He admitted with a mischievous smile yet Henry says nothing.

“Clarence understands my humor unlike you do Henry, maybe I should take him out timeout now.”

He twisted onto his stomach looking at the store ahead of him, he broke a window there last time by accident. He can still see the broken glass left behind, he had even said sorry before remembering no one was there to yell or call the cops.

That's a good thing about the world ending, Tommy could do anything bad and wouldn't get in trouble for it. Breaking windows could be a pass time if he wanted, but he felt bad even when it was an accident.

“Henry, you know Techno broke the window in their room once? He tossed a book and it went right through it. Papa was so upset about it, it was kind of funny.” He shares moving the stuffed animal up where he could see it.

*“HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO THROW A BOOK AT THE WINDOW ON ACCIDENT?!”*  
*Phil shouted exhausted at the sight.*

*Wilbur snickers in the background while Techno wilts, not expecting the yelling from his dad.*

*“To be fair I was aiming for Wil, I didn't know he would have moved.” The pink-haired twin responded back, smiling at the shout Wilbur gave back.*

*Phil groaned, ushering the two out the room, looking back at the room with a frown before shooting his head down the hall where Tommy was hiding while giggling at his father.*

*The older blonde smiled walking down the hall towards the child, “Didn't I just put you in bed?” he asks crouching down so he could see Tommy better.*

*Tommy laughs louder, “I snuck out, Wilbur says I'm a sneaky boy.”*

*Shaking his head Phil picked up the boy as he moved back down the hall to Tommy's room, “We don't listen to what your brothers say, stay my good kid please? God knows I have enough trouble-makers.”*

*Tommy squeals when Phil lays him back down in bed tickling his sides slightly, “I'm not a troublemaker! I'm a good boy papa!” He shouts crawling under his blankets to escape his fathers attacks.*

*“That you are Tommy, at least I know you won't ever give me a heart attack.”*

Tommy wonders if that changed now, was he still a good kid in the eyes of his father?

He won't know. But he likes to assume he still is, that he always will be the good kid in his family.

“We don't tell dad I broke a window ‘k? Our secret guys, we never broke anything!” He whispers picking himself off the ground ignoring how the red jacket had gotten even dirtier from the ground.

The rain slowly started once he did, hitting his hair and face slightly making him flinch. He rushes to get everything in his bag, not looking back at the pond as he runs inside a building he stayed in last time.

“We can look for ducks tomorrow when it isn’t bad outside I promise.” He tells the two inanimate objects later once he got settled in a makeshift bed, “And once I show you a duck you won’t tell Dad about the window.”

*Take me to see the ducks again Wilbur, please let me see them one more time.*

*I just wanna mock the ducks one more time with you, that's all I ask.*

*Please keep waiting, don't forget me ok? And once I get there I can stop writing in this book and I won't need it anymore. We can burn it or throw it away, I won't need it when I have you guys right?*

*Maybe I'll keep it just in case.*

## Chapter End Notes

Phil hearing a man insult his son once: oh no where did i get this gun? Oh no there's a war now hm, oh well.

Meanwhile Tommy crying over a fucking deer

((oh u want a happy ending so bad, you wanna see them reunite huh? laughs at you all....so do i)) Also yeah Tommy turning back wasn't smart but nothing anyone does in this will be a smart decision in Tommy's mind he thought turning back would keep him safe because he didn't know the people, who are yes Hannah and Ponk aka people searching for Tommy. trust da process but also dont cuz i could turn on yall at any second

Comment or Tommy loses henry :) /j

# I'll blame myself so no one else can

## Chapter Summary

Some new insights on two different characters, someone (but not who you think) is found, and Tommy can't catch a break. OR CAN HE :)?

## Chapter Notes

**((TW: Minor Character death, self blaming and tiny suicidal thoughts, seeing someone die happens twice in this, no big characters though dw yet, guns. Talking about murder, dissociation i dont know if i should tag that or not but just to be safe i am ))**

Kinda wanna make a music playlist for this story of the songs that help inspire me to write this stuff smh

I WAS TRYING TO DO A THREE DAY UPDATE BUT COULDNT SO I'M SORRY, however this chapter ended up being 9k so theres some hope i guess

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream found a friend in Techno during the whole getting ready to fight a tyrant thing, both having shared interests, liking books that got them called nerds during school, the thrill and adrenaline life gave you when you did dangerous things.

Dream was a person that didn't have to worry about being alone ever, he had Sapnap before he had George, had George before he had Techno.

But Dream had always been a protector, always the one to step up and keep those he loved safe. Techno shared that same thing, Dream didn't have to worry about keeping another safe if it meant they knew how to save themselves.

But He also felt pity for the boy and his family, god knows what he would've done if he lost Tubbo during all this. They lost their parents the day it happened, Dream remembers rushing home with Tubbo after he had taken the boy out to the park down the road only to see a man take down another random guy and the rest was history.

Eighteen years old and Dream suddenly watched the world end like many others, he watched others panic as he ran home with all his strength making sure Tubbo saw nothing. But the second he got home he saw his mother fighting for her life while another person- He couldn't call that thing a human- took her flesh like it was a drug.

Dream blamed himself when he found out the reason she was outside was because she had tried to find them.

He begged their dad to save her, screamed and cried when the man pushed them into a car leaving her for dead. Tubbo, and Dream will forever regret this, saw his mother dying and never got to say goodbye.

Dream's dad lasted only thirty minutes after, he's thankful he never saw his dad die that day. He knows his dad had tried to run inside a gas store, he heard the screams and a father never came back out.

Dream had to drive the car by himself leaving behind boy parents just so he could save their lives, he blames himself for that as well.

*"When can we go home? I hate being in the car." Tubbo whines poking at the seatbelt that held him safely while his brother frantically drove.*

*Dream grits his teeth, eyes staying alert on the road ahead as the news station cuts off abruptly, "I can't answer that bud, just keep looking down alright?"*

*He gets a whine after, but Tubbo never looked up.*

He won't ever say this to his friends, but he almost left them behind. It's cruel and he knew that, but there won't ever be anything in this world that would have made him bring his baby brother into danger. Dream would open those gates if it meant Tubbo stayed alive, he would and will sacrifice a life for Tubbo.

So yes he thought about leaving them, he forgot about them entirely but the images of Sapnap screaming for help and George dying was enough to have him turn the car around sharply to get them.

He had hoped they were still alive, and to his relief they were. George had immediately ran to Sapnap's house to get the boy, and when Dream busted in the front door and saw them huddled in a corner, scared he would hate himself for the thought of letting them be alone during this.

The hugging was short, he demanded they get whatever they could because they weren't staying there.

"It's not even safe out there Dream, walking out those doors is basically hanging yourself for bait!" George had shouted as Dream sent Tubbo with Sapnap upstairs to be safe while they got ready.

Huffing Dream placed more cans into one of the bags he found, "Staying here isn't either, there's a zone that's helping people and that's where I'm taking Tubbo."

"If you really don't wanna leave, fine, but I am. I'm not staying here waiting for my death and getting Tubbo caught up in it." He grits out sending a glare at the older boy, "Pick your battle George."

"What about Sap's parents, we leave them with a quiet house and a missing son?" George spits back out, crossing his arms tightly together.

Dream...Dream knows that wouldn't be a good thing. He did he really did, but the sad thing was about that? Neither of the boy's parents worked far from home, if Dream came at the time he did and they still weren't here?

It meant two things.

“Me and you both know the chances of them showing up are slim to none. I know it's gonna hurt him, but we can't wait for something that's never gonna show up.” he says, admitting the harsh truth, watching as his best friend flinches back harshly.

“Don't- Don't imply that they're dead when *you* don't know that.”

Dream straightens sending another look at George before pointing out the window, “Then why aren't they here? The markets aren't far, where they work isn't far. They either died or..or they left him behind George.”

Neither made another comment, But George sent a sad look towards the front door before helping Dream pack up.

The last thing he hears from the argument is George whispering, “He's only sixteen..that isn't fair on him.” that would ring in his ears for the rest of that day. Having to pull Sapnap aside and explain it was the worst thing he felt he had ever done, but they all got out alive.

And that's all that mattered to him.

So yes he understands Techno's grief, that's why he allowed himself out those gates to help. He owed the family that much, they saved them all when others were afraid of stepping up. If not for them, he doesn't think they would have survived. They promised safety, they gave them that.

It hurt leaving Tubbo behind, but the knowing thought that the boy would have still been safe if he never came back was enough. Dream didn't care if he died in this shit show, he didn't care about what would happen to him. Tubbo was his main concern, and Dream was okay with leaving the boy in good care.

*"What's your brother like?" He had asked only three days before the entire mess. An eventful night of planning with the family, and Techno had stepped out for some air*

*He gets a weird look in return, which was understandable since he was still technically a stranger to the boy. He even was ready to give up then and there until Techno seemed to smile at the thought of the boy.*

*"He's a little shit for one, but when he Isn't that kid turns into an angel. A spoiled one that could turn on you in a second." He gives Dream that information slowly, "He gets his looks from our Dad, literally just looks like a mini version of him actually."*

*"Same with Tubbo, he looked like our dad while I looked like Mom." Dream laughed out leaning on the old railings.*

*"Me and Wil look like our Mom too, I think she was upset that Tommy didn't look like her either. She was so ready to mock Dad for having three kids that looked like her." The long haired boy groaned out, "But Tommy came and stole away the spotlight and Dad got braggin rights."*

*"Did she not make it during this whole thing?" Dream asked carefully not knowing if he had pushed too far.*

*Techno frowned, shaking his head as he looked up at the stars, "She didn't make it a long time ago, Tommy was still a baby when she died. Me and Wil had just turned eight, all I know was she got in a bad crash coming home and didn't make it overnight."*

*Wincing Dream sent an apologetic look, "Sorry for your loss man, really."*



*But Techno shrugged squirting at the stars avoiding the look.*

*“If it was before all this I'd say thanks, but I think I'm happy she didn't live to see all this. Might be sick of me to say that, but I'd rather know she died then watch her suffer like we are.” Turning finally to look at Dream, he sees a boy only a year younger look so so tired.*

*“My Mom would've never lasted in a world like this, Tommy was her baby and he still would've been if she lived. Losing Tommy would've killed her, It's killing our dad everyday he isn't here.” he mused to the boy, “I mean it when I say Tommy is everything to us, He keeps Wilbur alive and he keeps Phil smiling. Tommy kept me from falling into myself, without him we aren't complete.”*

*“That's why Phil wanted him to come home to a safe environment with us, why Tommy has to come back. If he never comes back, If he died during this? I know none of us would survive anymore.” He finishes staring down Dream with cold untrusting eyes.*

*But Dream nods with a fierce look, he accepts the words as they are. Understands what Techno had implied under his words and pats the boy's shoulder grinning.*

*“Guess we really have to make sure he returns to a safe place then.”*

*That night Dream found a friend in Techno, just as Techno did with Dream.*

So Dream coming back with nothing, no blonde child excited to see his family again in his arms, just supplies and toys for the other kids. It hurt him badly knowing he failed them, hurt that he couldn't be the one that brought Tommy home.

There was a bit during the search where he imagined Tubbo getting a new friend, imagined watching his brother play with someone near his age and if what he had to go by with what he knew of Tommy, he felt like they would've been great friends.

Dream isn't the one to tell them, he knew he couldn't be the one to do it, so the second their car gets past the open gates and stops he runs to his shared home with his friends.

He hugs Tubbo as tight as he can the second the boy ran out the house upon seeing him, and he apologizes silently to a family he can't face.

---

Puffy's team came back empty handed, dejected and fearful for what they would've had to break to the family. She watches Dream, high-tailed it home with George not far from behind, she doesn't blame them for it. Foolish and Amy stay helping her unload the car, but she knows they didn't want to be the ones either.

She knew they wouldn't hurt them for not finding him, but that's not why she shook on the way to tell them. She was shaking because she mourned for them, she hurt for them. Puffy may have never been able to be a mother, she may not understand the grief of losing a child sure.

But she knew the grief of losing a loved one, not knowing if they were ok or not. Puffy knew the pain and despair you feel when you can't even know for sure if they were still alive or if they suffered before disappearing forever. The difference was Puffy found out, Puffy had her time to mourn someone she knew died. Puffy knew not to hope that they would come home alive and well, she knew when her mother told her her older sister wasn't gonna come home.

Phil and his sons don't get that honor, they don't get to know anything but that Tommy was somewhere out there still. They get that harsh pain of hope, the harsh reality that their youngest was alive or dead but not with them. They have to wake up and ponder about a kid they have no clue on.

She's shameful to say it, But Puffy doesn't believe Tommy had even lived.

From what they've been told, if a car full of people didn't survive she didn't believe a once nine year old could've either. No one but the people who saw the car on the search knew what happened, they could've been lied to that Tommy even did survive,

No body of any of the victims had been brought back to bury, maybe no one wanted to tell the family the truth. And if the boy did survive that crash, he could've died from an injury that he walked out with.

If that crash didn't kill Tommy, then the new world they lived in would have. Grown up's didn't live through this, she doubts a ten year old would.

It's cruel she knows, but Puffy looks at the reality head on. That doesn't mean she won't stop searching no, she owes Phil so much and if searching for a boy she didn't believe made it helped him she would do it in a heartbeat.

She just knew three things, Tommy could be brought back alive and well. Maybe traumatized but still alive, and the family could be happy together.

Tommy could never be found either, and they would end up having to stop searching. And the family would die in their grief, die grieving for the boy and never find peace.

Or they bring home a body to bury and a family that will mourn, a father that will scream at the sky and brothers that will die on the inside at the sight. They could find peace knowing what happened, but they would never find peace again after.

Puffy stops at the door of the family's home and frowns, knocking twice slowly, scared to tell them something they didn't want to hear.

Her heart cracks when she hears loud booming steps rush to the door, it breaks more when Wilbur slams it open looking hopeful searching for a blonde that wasn't there.

He looks at Puffy, and she shakes her head.

“I’m sorry.” She whispers, holding her hands together tight as she watches the despair be painted onto this boy’s face.

Wilbur’s voice wavers, hand slowly letting go of the wooden door as he looks down, “Is- Is he dead? Is there a body we have to bury or?”

Once more another crack.

“No oh god no, there isn’t anything to bury. He just...nothing was found. We found nothing, not even a trace that a kid could’ve been there. The other groups are still out there, looking past where we did, I swear.” She rushes out shaking with the boy, watching as some hope slowly comes back. It’s not enough though.

Wilbur only nods slowly, backing away into the house once more looking at Puffy, yet she could see he had gone far away into his mind.

“Thank you.” is all she hears before the door is closed shut softly, and she can’t help but turn with shame knowing she couldn’t help them like she wished she could.

“You better be alive kid, prove me wrong. Please.” She begs quietly looking at the fences below, “Please prove me wrong.”

---

Telling his family that Tommy wasn’t found sucked, secluding himself away after only hurting them more. The soft knocks on his door, the pleas for him to come out, he ignored them all as he sunk deeper into his brain leaving nothing but a broken body behind. Watching as everything went on but having no control, he’s been through this before he knows what's happening.

Techno does too, he's been there through half of them. Knows when Wilbur starts to go just by his actions, each time he waits until he knows he has to do something.

That's why he doesn't bother knocking, letting himself in before sitting down on the bed softly. Just like before back when Wilbur would panic over school or theater, he sits there and holds his brother's hand until he's ok, until he starts to come back.

It's only five hours of laying there, taking mini naps before waking up and sitting there mumbling soft words of encouragement when Wilbur finally comes back, mumbling small words to test out how far he was.

"Do you remember-" He tries before he bursts into coughing from the use of his voice, raspy and warped from not speaking for a bit. But when he looks up at Techno he sees the tears falling down, sees the guilt and misery.

And Wilbur shook under the weight of all the guilt he felt, looking at his twin brother. His only brother left, the brother that was here and he wanted to scream at the world for everything it's done

He tries again..

"Do you - Do you remember when we were little and we would pretend Tommy didn't exist?" He questions under the tense air, watchful of his brother's reactions.

Techno takes a moment being letting out a small laugh as he remembers it, "Yeah..He would get so pissed at us and start crying to Dad. I used to hate it when he did that, but I understand we were mean." He says with a soft remembering smile.

Wilbur gave a crooked grin, turning away from his twin to the window that let in small light. Out there was something they helped make for Tommy. They did this for Tommy, they made this for him.

But he wonders if Tommy will ever see it.

"I like to think that's what's happening now you know, that we're just ignoring him and he's right there ready to throw a storm at us." Twisting his outfit's sleeve around harshly, he notices it needed to be cleaned badly.

Wilbur lets out a harsh shaky breath.

"I like thinking I'm ignoring him, because it means there's something there to ignore."

Neither of them speak, But Techno feels his heart break once more at the word's. The hidden truth beneath them, just how broken his brother had been over this.

It's a heartbreaking realization that Wilbur had gone to that point of believing Tommy was there, doing anything he could to make it where Tommy was just right fucking there.

There's nothing Techno can do about it, he isn't great at comfort or helping others out. He won't ever be able to be that person that can tell his brother everything's ok when he doesn't even think it is, Techno's just as lost as everyone else is.

Techno can't do anything but watch as Wilbur drowns in grief and guilt alone.

"I blame myself, you know." He whispers, pulling his head into his legs as he curls up.

Techno hums, bringing him into a hug trying his best to show that he didn't blame Wilbur.

He can't tell if it helped or not.

---

He wonders what he's done to deserve this all, he's not happy to ever admit it but Tommy's just a little kid. He knew he should've been out there playing in his hometown making friends and having fun. Not surviving and worrying about when would be his last.

He desperately wishes whatever was out there playing with him would stop showing him the monsters or dead people, he doesn't know if he can take anymore of it.

He can't take another death, can't take another moment of watching someone die while he does nothing about it. But sadly, his prayers won't ever be heard and Tommy learns something new again.

Tommy learns how you become a monster, he should've known from the start but he was ever so clueless. At first he thought it was the unlucky people who randomly turned. Just people who were picked that ate others after because they were mindless people.

But then the big group comes and Tommy has to hide away on the top floor of a building and watch it pass, he was the lucky one he finds out.

Out there he sees an unlucky woman who wasn't fast like Tommy was get bit by one of them screaming in fear and pain alike, he couldn't do anything but watch as she suffered. A giant group of them was out there, Tommy was safe inside.

Yet he hears her scream even when he looks away from the window, when she stopped he thought she had finally passed on and she did. He thought she was freed from the misery the monsters were causing her, just like he would've thought before.

Except when he looks out a few hours later he sees her walking around stumbling over things as if she was a small baby learning how to walk for the first time. If it wasn't for the

fact that Tommy knew she died, knew no one would've survived that, he really would have thought she was alive and confused.

But she didn't have half her arm, bite marks covered her body and he gagged when he saw some skin had been completely ripped away leaving behind a not so pretty sight.

If they bite you, you become one. If you die, you're gonna be one. There was no win win in this, Tommy could die from a heart attack and still come back as one.

He hates that.

He thought dying was safe, thought if he died during this he would've just stayed dead and gone somewhere else where he could've been safe. But now he knows if he died he wouldn't be a human anymore, wouldn't be a dead body someone would come across and weep for. If he died he would be forced to watch as he became one of the monsters, hurting others until his flesh decayed away leaving him nothing but bones.

Tommy doesn't want to go away anymore, not if it meant becoming one of those.

*Techno, do you remember when you told me people that pass on get buried in caskets?*

*Do you think they're still there, trapped forever stuck under the dirt? Do you think mama's one of them, maybe she's out there trying to get out to come home.*

*I don't want her too, I want her to stay dead and not be one of those Tech. It's so bad, she doesn't deserve that.*

*No one deserves this, it's so horrible and I want to stay inside forever if it means I can't see them anymore. Please find me, please find me before I get hurt by them.*

*You promised you'd keep me safe forever; please keep me safe from being one. Please don't let me stay one if I get caught, I know it'll hurt but whatever needs to be done i need you to do*



*it. I can't be one, I can't.*

*Please hurry, I'm so tired.*

“Henry, If I go can you still stay with me?” He whispers, scared to be too loud, he had backed away from the window and ended up hiding behind some old dusty furniture. Clutching at Henry tightly as if it would go away within a second.

“I won’t eat you, I won’t hurt you I promise. Just stay so I won't be alone, and you can tell them I love them ok?” He whines, wishing the stuffed animal could actually talk just so he knew something real was there.

“I wanna be a little kid Henry, being a big one isn’t the best. I don’t wanna be big anymore.”

Henry stays silent just as always, and Tommy bites himself to muffle his cries just so nothing can hear him.

“You think I could get Wilbur to sing to me again? I think i have a chance, that’s what I'm gonna do the second I get back. I’m gonna have Papa carry me until his arms hurt and Wilbur’s gonna sing, Techno’s gonna tell me stories and I get to say some back” He starts again trying to bring some comfort in the room,

Humming, he allows himself a small smile.

“I don’t care about you not talking, I can talk for us both, that's fine.”

*No it isn't. Stop lying, it's bad you know.*

Tommy stays in the building until he knows it's safe, hiding away by himself as the muffled groans and hundreds of feet walk outside. He takes small peeks out there, just to check how many were still there. He draws messy doodles of his family, a few of Henry and even Clarence in time out just to laugh.

He explores the room five times, pretending to be in awe at the old furniture it held. He hums small muted songs he remembered from Wilbur's mini concerts he held at home. He does about everything until they finally pass, only then does he crawl out there.

There's some wranglers, nothing he couldn't avoid but it didn't make him feel better knowing he still had to avoid something. But he high-tails it out of there, not looking back once.

He makes another small grave for the lady he saw die, but it's nowhere near that place when he does. It's not pretty and it isn't big, nothing like the last grave since he wanted to get further away.

He's tired of doing that though.

But it's there for her.

---

Phil decides enough is enough and ends up sitting Wilbur down on the couch, waiting for his son to talk. He tries making small talk, tries to coax him into talking, but in the end he lets Wilbur take his time.

Wilbur tapped his leg twice, bounced it three. He looked everywhere but at Phil, trying to avoid the future as best as he could.

He fails, and he knows his Dad wouldn't let him go without talking. So he does, he gives his dad what he wants. Just not how the man thought it would've been

"Tommy wanted to be an actor in music videos y'know." Wilbur starts up making Phil look back at him curiously.

The brunette crushed the pillow in his hands, "He used to think I'd get somewhere with my music, and wanted to act in the videos he thought I'd make. No matter how many times I told him I wouldn't get there, he still kept it up."

Phil...didn't know that. Tommy had always changed what he liked, wanted to be something else every second. A normal kid who changed their mind about everything, but Phil never knew that one.

He knew Tommy wanted to be a doctor until he realized he couldn't stand blood or anything related, he knew about the phase of being a scientist.

Working in a library, *Tommy wanted Techno's attention.* Working with animals, *Phil knew that one was because Tommy thought he could bring home any animal.*

One time he wanted to be a clown, then he saw his first clown in real life and proceeded to hate them. *Phil remembers how Tommy came screaming bloody murder making him think someone had hurt him, a little five year old clinging on his legs crying and begging for him to make the bad guy go away.*

*That bad guy was the clown, and Phil felt a small bit sorry for snorting at that. But he still picked up Tommy and promised he would save him.*

The father thought he knew every passion Tommy wanted to try out, but he never *never* knew that one. He doesn't know how he feels about it really.

Then Wilbur continued, But at that moment, Phil didn't see a son who was surviving anymore.

"Tommy won't get to act in anything anymore."

Phil sees a son who's suffering, who's unhappy and vengeful against himself. He doesn't see the seventeen year old that woke up cranky but still managed to come downstairs for breakfast, there's no child Phil raised to be the happiest he could be.

"He won't come up smiling at me, because of me we won't ever see him again."

He sees his son hurting and blaming himself for a death that couldn't have happened. *Tommy didn't die, Tommy was still alive. No matter how much they say it, that suspicious part of them says otherwise.*

Wilbur turns at his dad, tears gathering in his eyes with a heartbreaking smile. Phil wonders how long his son had been hurting with him realizing it.

"Tommy isn't coming back here, Tommy won't come back. I *let* him die by letting him go."

"Wilbur - don't *say* that. He isn't dead and it wasn't your fault!" Phil stresses reaching over to grab the boy's arms tightly, shaking him as tears build up in both their eyes.

Wilbur laughs and it's downright chilling, "We know it's true, dad Tommy isn't coming back to us you know that as well as I fuckin do." he taunts out, Phil can't see a trace of who his son was anymore.

"I killed him, letting him go even when I denied it? That was the key factor in this, if I fought more and made him stay he would be here. Instead I had him die early, Tommy was never meant to be a part of this world and you knew that." He shouts, pushing away from his father who looked damn near heartbroken.

Phil shook his head letting the burning tears slip out as he stood up. “You don’t get to do this Wil, Tommy’s out there alive and surviving. He’s looking for us just as we’re looking for him.”

Scoffing Wilbur looks away with a glare, “A corpse is waiting for us you mean, our Tommy died in that crash. I see it on everyone's faces, I see how they react when we say he lived. No one thinks he did, it’s time we accept it instead of forcing ourselves to wait for someone-”

He cuts himself off standing up abruptly as he looks down at his dad with a sad knowing grin, “Who will never come home.” He finishes mockingly, ignoring how Phil looked ready to scream and how Techno walked down looking appalled at what he said.

Wilbur knew the truth, he knew his baby brother wasn’t ever gonna survive on his own. Tommy couldn’t even make it through a horror movie without bursting into tears, he doubts he could make it through this.

He knew he was the main cause of Tommy’s disappearance, the reason why he wasn’t here. Wilbur let his brother die all because he listened to others, he helped Tommy suffer. And the sad thing? Wilbur felt slightly good that Tommy died without them there, he doesn’t know what he could've done if he was forced to see the boy die in front of him instead.

Tommy was a kid who didn’t know how to live on his own, and Wilbur is a teenager who gave up on wishful thinking.

Right as Phil goes to open his mouth, probably to shout at him the front door slams open and they all turn fast to see Puffy leaning against the door out of breath.

Puffy almost falls into the room staring down Phil as she catches her breath, for a moment the man assumes something bad happened.

But then Puffy opens her mouth, and the room shifts away from the previous argument.

"They- Hannah's group found a kid." She breathes out wincing when Phil slams up from the chair, the twins following suit as hope rises in their hearts. *She takes in how Phil was crying and how red Wilbur's face was, she takes in that utter sight of pure regret in the boy's eyes as she says it.*

But she knows better than to let them hope, so she raises a hand before they can run or talk.

"But..I don't think it's Tommy Phil, this isn't your kid." She sighs out heart-breaking at the despair their faces pulled and how Wilbur resigned himself into a state of hurt again. "He- this kid doesn't remember a lot, Ponk thinks he has some head trauma. But I needed you to know before word got around and you assumed, this could be Tommy yeah but..."

But she doesn't think it is him goes unsaid as it floats around their brains, Phil forces a smile on as slowly moves from the living room.

"Let's check then? At least greet the new guest huh?" He grits out motioning for the twins to follow, Puffy hates that she's the one that had to break the news.

When she found out she was excited even, thinking that the family would finally find the lost boy and find peace. *She thought Tommy pulled through with proving her wrong.*

Yet when she saw the black haired boy who didn't even remotely look like any of them, her hope was crushed for them. Sure she's glad they saved a kid, she won't be a prude and scream at them for finding the wrong one when the boy desperately needed help.

But she knows how everyone else felt when she said it wasn't Tommy, and that's what sucked most.

---

Phil crouches down giving the younger boy on the bed a warm smile, "Hi there mate, I'm Phil and I assume you know who Ponk and Puffy are right?"

The boy nods shyly looking down at the white sheets covering him.

“Do you know your name? Can you give it to me if so please?” He asked gently, knowing the boy could lash out if he pushed too hard.

Humming he takes a minute before answering Phil. "I know my name is Ranboo, and-an I know my mom's helped me get out." He admits twisting the thin blankets without looking at Phil.

"That's good bud, remembering things like that can help us out a lot." Phil encouraged the boy with a smile, "We can get you a book so you can write things down for now alright?"

The boy nods, still not looking at him. The kid apparently hates eye contact, he notes that down for future reference s.

“Do uh- Do you remember where your mom’s gone?” He asks, praying for a good answer only to frown when the boy shakes his head.

“I think I remember mama telling me she loved me? I don’t know where ma went, I think I fell down.” He says face twisting up as he tries to force himself to remember.

“Hey hey, don’t hurt yourself ok? It’s fine if you don’t remember a lot, don't try and force it, we have a nice person who can help you out alright?” Phil says tapping the boy's arms slightly, sighing in relief when the boy shakes his head in understanding.

“Sit tight alright? I’m gonna go ask some questions and get you a place to stay at.” He says as he waves goodbye, closing the door quietly before looking at the two other adults with a frown. Sending a shake of his head towards the twins when they look at him wondering.

“Can either of you take him? He can’t stay in here forever.” He starts up as he gets up to them, “My house is a no, I can't take him in only to kick him out later on.”

“I can’t either, with Sam and Fran together in a small house there wouldn't be any room for him. Also the fact that none of us know how he would react to animals.” Pink responded back with a similar frown.

He looks at Puffy hopefully only for her to shake her head as well.

“I’m still planning on leaving again, besides I have four boy’s living with me each rowdy. I can see if the kid can stay there while I’m gone but I don’t know how well Sapnap could be with him.” She states moving her weight onto one leg, “I don’t even know if Dream and George are staying here or going with me. We could try Niki? She lives alone.”

“That’s the pink haired girl right? The one who’s started baking and leaving it on people's doorsteps?” Phil asks, tilting his head as greasy blonde hair falls with it.

Puffy nods with a growing smile as she responds. “Yeah that's her, she’s a bit older than your boys and I know she had experience with babysitting. Besides it could do her some good having someone in the house with her, she knows how to handle kids like him too.”

Clapping his hands Phil turns around with a smile. “Then let's ask her and start settling him in. God knows he would like living in a medical place. I would hate these places.”

Techno snorts interrupting them, “he hates them cause they always tell him what's wrong with him when he thinks he’s fine.”

They both relax a little when Wilbur laughs at that. “I remember when he sprained his hand and refused to listen to the Doctor, Mom made him sit there until he finally listened.”



Phil glares at them and pouts when he hears the other two in the room laugh.

It wasn't enough to push away what happened earlier, but Phil takes this moment of happiness with giant hands.

God knows when they'd get another moment like this.

---

*HI SO THIS IS UH I DUNNO A GOOD PART HERE NOTEBOOK*

*I found this really cool neighborhood right? And since I was running low on food I went into the homes and guess what???*

*I found a cat!!!! And it likes me :D*

*I'm naming it cow cuz it looks like one, cow is my best friend and currently we are both on someone's couch cuddling and they are so fluffy!!*

*I'm bringing Cow with me, cuz cows My best friend and you can't leave best friends behind. Apparently they belong to someone cuz they had a tag, but I don't think their owner is here anymore so..*

*My cat now, Papa you're gonna love her and Techno no getting rid of her she's family now. And no Wilby you can't have her, she's mine.*

*I gotta go now she's demanding more hugs, bye!!*

Tommy throws the book at the third meow, immediately pulling the cat back to him with a giggle as her fur tickles him.

"Best friend, My best friend, you are my best friend!" He giggles petting her fur, not giving a damn about the outside world, he's in his happy bubble.

"So pretty, you're a very pretty Cow, a very very pretty kitty. Wilbur will love you lots, not as much as me though." He says, staring at her orange wide eyes with awe.

Cow meows and Tommy all but lights up more.

"Cow cow we gotta go now ok? We can look in the other houses and rest, but tomorrow we start walking. You can uh- you can rest in my hoodie!" He says, nodding at his own words, watching as she stretches before hopping off the couch.

Tommy hurries off, packing the notebook back in his backpack before rushing to the door. "You ready? Remember to stay by me ok, if you wanna rest you lemme know." He whispers to the cat before opening the door.

They get into a few homes, some she sits outside for while Tommy checks out. One she hissed at so Tommy didn't go in, he's glad cause he noticed a bloody handprint on the wall so Tommy gives her a tiny treat for it.

Cow apparently liked that cause she walked a circle around him happily after making him giggle again.

"We can find kitty treats for you, and I think we can even get some toys but not a lot. I only have two bags, we need to make sure we keep space." He says as they continue walking down the street, grin never going away all because she stayed with him.

Cow meowed at something, "And when Papa sees you he's gonna break and immediately accept you." Tommy continues with a hop.

Another meow and another hop, he doesn't notice she was starting to crouch.

"Techno might try to get rid of you, but he can come around!" Tommy says not realizing what she was starting to do.

"And Wilbur will- cOW!" Tommy shouts after she interrupts him running at a blue house down the street.

He immediately starts running after her tripping over his legs as his bags weigh him down. She just keeps on, rushing at the house like it was food.

"COW STOP!" He shouts forgetting he's supposed to stay quiet, scared that she was leaving him behind.

He watches her jump onto the porch before disappearing into a small door connected to the front one, and he sighs knowing she just ran into what he assumed was her house.

He runs faster just so he can hurry and find her, tripping over the steps on the porch before he bends down looking through the cat door.

"Coooww? Cow is it safe in there?" He asks as it echoes against the silent house.

"Cow?" He starts again trying to shove his head through the small door, he hears her meow so he knows she's safe.

He grins ready to step up and open the door when he sees purple slippers move in front the door before it opens by itself and he's pulled in with a loud screech.

*He hears her meow again, but he keeps screaming as the hand drags him in.*

---

Sam huffed as he scoped out the second building, the other's long since moved to the other ones seeing as he took the big one.

They even ignored him when he tried asking for help, so he growled a bit under the gas mask as he stepped over a dead body.

"Shitty teammates, should've gone with Hannah's group." He mumbles pointing his gun in the next room, "Hello? Tommy?" He waits for a reply only to sigh when he gets none in return.

"C'mon kid, where are you?" He whispers moving on, groaning when he hears a large gun shot go on outside.

"Amateur's, you'll get yourselves killed." He states to himself rolling his eyes, not his fault if they do.

In his opinion it would be better if they did just get themselves killed, saving him and everyone else the trouble of dealing with them.

They repeatedly complained on the way here, tried bribing him into turning around even.

*"We can say we didn't find shit! We looked and looked but nothin' " One of the guy's in the back started up as he turned the car onto another road.*

*"Yeah if we all just say that everyone's gonna believe it." Another one piped up.*

*The third huffs staring down Sam in the rear view mirror, "Don't get why we have to waste our lives for a kid we won't find."*

*So Sam smiles even if they couldn't see under the mask and nods, pulling the car over to a stop before turning to them.*

*"If you all wanna do that, be my guest, Go on and start walking." He says with a gentle sarcastic tone, "I'm not gonna give up on a kid, but hey if you guys are serious go on. Start fucking walking."*

*They all wilted, turning away the second he finished and he hummed.*

*"No? No one wants to do that? Alright." He says before starting to move once more, "Next time keep your mouths shut if you don't wanna do something."*

*They stayed silent the rest of the way. Sam selfishly takes in the silence, humming as he turns down another road.*

Sam doesn't like them all that much really, he didn't like them when they dodged his knowing looks or when they sneered as Phil walked out covered in that man's blood.

He knows to be wary around them, they were the type of people who would give you up for a crumb if it meant saving their own asses.

Sam knew they wouldn't be good people, but here's the fun thing about this.

Sam has some secrets of his own, he isn't a good man at all hasn't been for a few years now and he wouldn't feel bad once putting a bullet in any of their heads if they showed the slightest hint of fucking him over.

He never felt bad before, he won't feel bad now.

Especially if it's a kid's life on the line, Sam wasn't gonna just give up on him without even trying. He knew what it felt like thinking everyone left you behind, Especially at a young age.

He remembers the nights where a seven year old watched through windows wondering when they would come back for him, he knows that hurt when you find out no one is coming back.

The wishes and the praying to a god that isn't real, the way your brain makes you think you were worthless. *Not worth saving, useless to them.*

There isn't a world where he wouldn't understand how that kid could be feeling right now.

He refuses to let that kid go through that, and if he has to find a body to bury he still would. He would give that last bit of relief and respect to Tommy and his family.

Even though he hopes there isn't a body, oh does he really hope. Sam won't be affected at these peoples deaths, but if he had to find a child's body and bring it back to a family that was hoping for him to be alive?

That could crack him just a tiny bit.

*But god does he really wanna strangle the people with him.*

He knocks down one of the dead ones, killing it with one swift stab before moving on.

Sam isn't one to give up, and he never will be.

---

---

Tommy doesn't stop screeching, believing he was about to die at the hands of a monster that somehow figured out how doors worked.

"LE-LEMME GO!" He cries out as he tries to get free, which was...relatively easy as the monster just let him go.

"Good god are you a fighter." The monster teases, which makes him stop and look up slowly. Monsters don't talk, they don't say anything but growls and groans.

Yet this one talks, so when he looks up and sees an old woman smiling down at him he gasps.

He takes in her appearance, grey short hair and those pink slippers again. She even had on a blue shirt with a cat stitched in, wearing some kind of long skirt that had little flowers in it.

"You speak?" He says looking at her with awe as she chuckles.

"I do yes, so do you." She says grinning at him, "God you are dirty, when was the last time you had a bath?" She questions touching his hair which had grown dirtier, matted even and since Phil wasn't there to cut his hair every month it grew a little.

"Since everything happens, you can't bathe when you gotta run." He pouts, crossing his hands as she tsked.

"And why are you running exactly? Shouldn't you be at home with your parents?" She questions again and Tommy rolls his eyes.

"No cause we left and I got separated, I'm on my way to find them dummy." He says again turning fast when he hears Cow meow.

"Cow! You scared me y'know, I thought we said no running away?" He scolds as the cat licks her legs without a car in the world.

The lady laughs again, making Tommy pout more, "You named my cat cow?" She said giggling as she walked past Tommy to the cat.

"Yeah cause she needed a name."

Another shake of her head, she bends down to pet the cat. " *He* has a name, which is Casper." She shoots back as the cat jumps up, slightly reaching for her hand.

Tommy blanks at that, staring at the cat in shock. Betrayal even if he could say that, this entire time Cow lied to him.

"Cow's a boy?!" He shouts in despair, frowning when he makes the lady laugh again.

"Yes *Casper* is a boy, always has been. Now let me ask you this, why did you come trying to barge into my home hm?" She asks, standing up with a soft grunt.

Tommy shifts nervously, he wouldn't have tried if he had known someone was still living here.

"I'm waiting, do you just barge into other's homes for fun?"

Tommy shakes his head fast looking a bit sheepish, "No ma'am, if I knew you were here I wouldn't have. But it's how I survive, if I can't find a building I sleep in the woods."



She blinks at that, taking in his words slowly in surprise.

"God I knew it was bad out there but I didn't know it was that bad, you've just been by yourself?" She urges on as she moves upstairs motioning for him to follow.

Tommy hums tracing the railings as he follows, "Yeah you're the first person that I've gotten to talk with for awhile now, which is cool cause Henry and Clarence suck for chatting."

She stops looking back at him confused, "And who are Henry and Clarence?"

"My rock and my stuffed cow, Clarence's the rock and Henry's the cow. You'd like them."

She just turned around, choosing not to comment.

"Who are you? I can't call you old lady because that's rude." Tommy states hopping up one stair.

"That's right it is, eighty-six years old and I'm still going." She huffs out waiting for him to get up the stairs, "But you can call me Clara, that alright?"

Tommy nods stepping into the hallway now, "Yeah that's a cool name, mine's cooler though cause I get multiple nicknames. But I like going by Tommy."

"Tommy's a very nice name, now.."

They stop in front of a bathroom and she just points inside, "My water works since I don't use that fancy shit you people use now. The hot water doesn't last long so you take a bath instead, no offense but I don't want a child dirtying my house up."

He looks confused at the bathroom, "Why am I taking a bath? You're just gonna kick me out right?" He questioned and looked at her disgruntled face.

"I am not gonna kick a seven year old out when it's almost night, that's just rude and cruel." She answers back pushing him inside.

"I'm ten."

Rolling her eyes she closes the door, "That's still worse kid. Don't take long, we can work on that rat nest later."

And then Tommy's left alone in the ladies bathroom, he sees the flowers on the walls and the old bathtub and sink he saw in movies.

She was right about it being near dark he realizes, from the tiny window in the bathroom it shines orange which meant the sun had started going down.

But Tommy knew better than to give up a chance like this, so that night he gets the best shower he's had in his entire life. All the dirt and ash wash off, dried blood from before that he was never able to fully get out. By the time he gets out and actually walks out clean, the sun had gone down.

Tommy sees a mirror and a stepping stool, so he pulls it over and looks into the mirror. It was a shock at first, he hadn't seen what he looked like in a while. Sure he caught glances in the windows and all, but he never had time to just stop and look.

He saw how pale he had gotten, how skinny he was. He saw how dulled his eyes had gotten, the new dark patches under his eyes that he remembers Techno having. Tommy looked older, and that scared him.

He looks for a while before noticing a large blue t-shirt hanging on the door with shorts beside it. Taking one look at his other clothes he frowns, he had already put on his old shorts but his undershirt and Techno's hoodie laid on the floor calling to him.

He would have to ask her to wash them, and Tommy walks out wearing a t-shirt that was far too large. Reminding him of when he stole Phil's shirts back when he was little, all because it was comfortable and his father always broke into a smile when he saw Tommy tripping over them. So maybe he pretends the shirt was his dad's, maybe he didn't.

"You're like a grandma." Is the first thing he says when he sees her in the kitchen chopping things up, he sees a small fire lamp flickering lighting up the kitchen. He knew that had a name, Phil had one of them but he didn't remember the name.

"Is that because I'm old?" She says not looking up as she focuses on chopping the carrots.

"That and because you have a grandma's house." He giggles moving to sit at the dining table.

She huffs giving him a stare, "Ya little shit I'll have you know this was my son's house."

"Was? Where is he?"

Tommy doesn't realize he shouldn't have asked that when she frowned, dodging his questioning look as she went back to chopping.

"Hun no one wants to stay with an old lady that can't run, the day this started my son took his wife and kids out of here and left me behind." Clara sighs out pulling out a pot before lighting a match under the stove, which Tommy gasped at.

"Why'd he do that? Couldn't he protect you?" He asks again, focusing on how the flames light up on the stove in amazement.

He doesn't see how sad Clara had looked, "Sometimes people have to make tough decisions, and he had to do what was best for his family." He doesn't notice the way she didn't say something else, how she wanted to but couldn't as she looks out the kitchen window as if someone was waiting for her.

But Tommy hops off his chair and runs to her with a grin, "You can be my Grandma then, Papa won't mind and we can take Cow with us when I leave!"

Clara smiles sadly at him, "Yeah? You think I'd be a good adopted Grandma?"

Tommy nods fast and she hands him a spoon making him a tad bit confused.

"Well seeing as you've just made me another Grandma again, you get to help me cook for the night."

Tommy gasps again, shaking in excitement at the thought of having homemade food for once.

That night he ends up talking with someone real, someone who could talk back and make him laugh. He learns how to start a fire, how to cook soup and learns more about Clara as she learns about him.

He even got to sleep in a soft bed again, without worrying about a monster breaking in and a cat to snuggle with.

*Papa you won't believe this but I got a grandma today, she's really really cool. I didn't get to have a grandma before, remember? Nanny and Pop-pop died before I was born, but now I get to know what they are like.*

*She even cut my hair for me, it's all soft and clean again. No tangles or anything, it felt nice once it was clean. She's nice but cusses a lot, which is cool cause I've never heard any old person except you cuss.*

*By the way Cow is a he, his name's also Casper but I'm fixing that. Cow it a better name and i can convince Ms. Clara to get it changed to Cow.*

*Oh yeah that's her name too, pretty right? I think I'm happy again dad, like really happy cuz I'm not alone anymore.*

*I have to sleep early though, she said we had things to do tomorrow and big kids need sleep so I'm doing that.*

*Love you and miss you :D see you soon Papa, and Tech and Wilby too. Wish you guys could see this, but it's ok I don't mind.*

*I'll be home soon I swear.*

## Chapter End Notes

Tommy upon finding Clara: Adopting a new grandma welcome to the family

Clara: what

(( Y'all gonna get attached to Clara I feel it in my bones and it will be so funny. i can hear the pitch forks getting ready each time i type a new chapter up. Also no one worry about dream being a bad guy in this i'm giving yall nice dream so i won't be beaten up in the comments over everything else smhsmh))

[https://twitter.com/Idespisemilk\\_?t=NVNfgnaLRwPBfc5WNJRfVw&s=09](https://twitter.com/Idespisemilk_?t=NVNfgnaLRwPBfc5WNJRfVw&s=09) follow for updates and cool art:)

Anyway comment or we lose Clarence /j

# Because the gun will lay on your heart

## Chapter Summary

Techno learns he's able to be upset as well, Tommy learns nothing stays good forever.

Cow just vibes, not a thought behind those eyes.

## Chapter Notes

**((TW: Character death, fighting, blood and injury, suicidal thoughts, Derealization in the first bit, gun's, murder?? Maybe idk if it counts but i'm still tagging it, pretty big breakdown, Describing what a zombie looks like, this chapter is kinda dark at one point and over all disturbing so stay safe!!))**

Remember this is all fanfiction and nothing going on is actually happening!! You are safe and ok <3

Hint for y'all: pay attention to the titles in each chapter :)

If you see a typo no you didn't

Hey guyyys i won't lie the main reason i didn't update sooner was cause i just forgot to finish up chapter four so lolol i feel like we are nearing the end but also not idk

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's bright when he starts to come too, so bright it burns his eyes even when he has them closed. When he does slowly open his eyes, the burning feeling stays for a moment, but when it goes he finds himself laying down in the living room. The living room of his real home, the home he thought they left behind a long time ago.

It's just a dream. It was all a dream, that's why he woke up here and not in some..

What was he doing?

He ends up pushing himself up, looking around fast confused as to what he had been doing. Something by the window catches his eye, a little bird staring at him silently. Watching and

waiting, Phil wouldn't like it if Wilbur let a bird inside. No matter how much Phil loved birds, it was a strict rule to keep them out.

"Hey buddy, oh look at you, you're so pretty!" he praises as he goes to pick it up, a sparrow he realizes. A little sparrow found its way inside, chilling out in the living room. "Dad would love you, but you got to go now ok?"

Right as he goes to pick it up it flies up with a shout, flying past his head and right up the stairs ignoring his pleas to stop. Even when he tries to run for it he finds that he can't. What was Wilbur even doing?

He was...he remembers Tommy asking him to play..He had gone to say yes but Phil had run in saying something? What did Phil say?

Wilbur agreed to play.

*What did Phil say?*

He looks around the house with a new found grin, listening to the little hidden giggles that surround it suddenly.

Hide and seek, they were playing hide and seek. Tommy's favorite game that he pulled his family into playing every week.

Wilbur was the seeker this time, it was him and Tommy playing this time. He thinks Phil had gone to town, thought maybe Techno was outside doing something.

He can't remember what.

When he looks at the front door the giggles boom in his ear and he turns back towards the stairs.

"Tommmyy, I can hear you ya know." He whispers with a laugh, following the giggles that lead him upstairs.

Knocking on the wall once he climbed up the giggles grew louder, Wilbur grinned knowingly. Tommy was never able to be a good hider, always giving away his spots right away.

"Oh Tomcat, where are you goofball?" He asked loudly, opening the first door which showed him the upstairs bathroom.

That's..that's not right the bathroom was at the end by Phil's room?

Maybe he was having a moment.

Humming he turns away opening the next door, Tommy's room yet the giggles didn't stop.

Wilbur walked in, smiling at the soft blue walls that shined under the sun that he helped paint all those years ago, the furniture that had crayon markings from when Tommy decided to make his furniture his newest sketchbook.

Phil had a field day with that one.

Toys thrown around, no matter how many times Phil told them to clean up, Tommy's room stayed messy.

He looks under the bed, in Tommy's closet and even in the toy box. Yet no little brother is in sight, so he turns back out.



The giggles started to bang harshly into his brain, right as he stopped in front of his shared bedroom.

The giggles stop, and Wilbur knows he found him.

He flinches when the door opens by itself, but that means Tommy had to have known Wilbur found him. So with a large step he burst into the room with another smile, knowing he just won the game.

Right on his bed rests the sparrow, staring at the unmoving curtain yet it's there. Waiting for him once more, and Wilbur follows where the bird was looking and sees his little brother's little feet pop out from the curtain, he sees the little shadow from his brother and rolls his eyes.

"You suck at hiding bubba, Techno needs to teach you how to hide better." He giggles walking over to the curtain ready to yank it.

The sparrow makes a noise and he turns to look at it, but it's no longer on his bed and the sun no longer shone in his room. He turns back fast towards the curtain, sure enough Tommy's shadow was still there.

There shouldn't be one if the sun had left his brain tries to say, Wilbur pokes at the curtain. Tommy doesn't move and Wilbur is a tad bit confused. So he yanks open the curtain and gasps.

Tommy isn't there, his eyes widened in shock because there was no way Tommy could've snuck out without him seeing.

Tommy wasn't there, and he's outside.

He turned around fast, he was just in the house. He was just in the house, where is he?

Tommy isn't here.

It's dark outside, the sun long gone and Wilbur's alone. That isn't right he screams, this wasn't right his brain yells.

Tommy. Isn't. Here.

The gates appear in front of him, looming and threatening calling to him with a sweet lying voice to open them. They call for him to walk out, to leave behind this past he wants back.

He looks back, confused and terrified.

Where was Tommy?

He tries to go back, he does. But hands grasp his clothes, words fill his ears and Wilbur is dragged through the gates.

Tommy was never here. *And it's you to blame.*

Right as he's pulled out the gates, he sees the sparrow sitting in the road waiting for him to be dragged out. He watches as the bird shifts into a small blue eyed blonde he missed dearly watching him with sad cruel eyes, he tries to reach he does.

But Tommy's body falls fast as if it had been shot right away. The gates close,

And Wilbur wakes up in the old broken down house with a shout.

---

Tommy finds out Clara surprisingly, for an old lady in the apocalypse, lives quite normal. Like nothing was wrong out past her front door, as if it was just another day. She wakes up early in the morning, Tommy not long after her and once they're both up she makes breakfast for them both.

*"Normally I'd have the radio on to listen to whatever news was on, but obviously we can't do that anymore." She said as she cut the bread into halves, "Shame though, I hate the quiet."*

*"You told me yesterday you'd trade me for a nickel if it meant you got quiet back." he retorts back with a grin.*

*"Shush your mouth and place the damn plates." Clara scolded back, though it was all in good fun.*

*Once she had given him his food he decided to do his daily amount of judgement that she learned to accept. Which he loved while she despised it, even if she smiled when he judged her every move. It was his own sense of normal, she had her daily life things he had his daily judging.*

*That day's judgement was about her clothes.*

*"You have really weird clothes." Tommy speaks with a mouth full of bread, it earns him a flick on his forehead.*

*"Don't talk when you're eating, it's rude." Clara demands, going back to cutting up her own food, "And when your son doesn't understand old people are allowed fashion you get weird clothes."*

*"Why can't you just get your own clothes?" He asks back, ignoring her comment about food.*

*She points a stern finger at him glaring, "you little shit I said stop, and I have my own clothes. I just like wearing these because they're comfortable."*

*Tommy swallows the bread while nodding his head, "My older brother Techno's like you, he has really cool clothes but preferred 'Comfort over Discomfort'."*

*Clara hums, placing the knife into the sink, "Your older brother's smart then."*

She listens to his request's, asks how he would like his food and makes it that way. She acts like his dad, and once breakfast ends the day doesn't stop there. Where Tommy would've been on the run at this point, she's outside watering plants and growing her garden. She asks Tommy to pick some fruit or vegetables and he does without complaint.

*"I hate tomatoes, they stink." He pouts after picking one and placing it into the basket, Clara over at the door watering a yellow rose bush. He liked that one, though she said he wasn't allowed to pick any off.*

*Both of them had been looking out just in case someone or something decided to pop up, so far they were fine.*

*"Well you might wanna change that attitude, if you have to eat it you have to eat it. Not like I can run down to a market anymore." She laughed turning around with a slow spin, she had her hair up in a bun that day and even put Tommy's in a small ponytail.*

*The corners of his mouth pointed downwards as he continued to pout, carrying the basket up to her, "I don't think I'll ever like them."*

*She had hummed, opening the door for him to get in and she followed not long after, "Sometimes the things we dislike might end up becoming our favorite thing ever, I used to hate my husband to the core of my heart and then I married the old fool." She explained with a wistful smile, remembering the man Tommy didn't get the chance to meet.*

*"Why'd ya hate him?" He asked, stealing some berries from the other basket with a giggle as she tried to slap his hand away.*

*"Well for one, I was young. Didn't like love all that much, and I especially hated the boy who stole all my toys no matter what. Even in high school he loved to make me mad, just as I did with him." Clara laughed loudly, yanking the berries up high when he went for more, "You act just like he did as a kid, annoying and a little shit."*

*Tommy had grinned high and that day for lunch, she made tomato soup and Tommy ate it.*

She had him do chores, stating he couldn't laze around her house all day and Tommy didn't mind it either. Once lunch came she allowed Tommy to play in the living room with Cow, *Who still was called Casper by Clara as she refused to change his name*, and she would make little sandwiches for them both. Once she had finished it she always sat in the same chair and read, occasionally answering his questions. A sense of normalcy she told him, they had to have something normal in this life.

Dinner was the same, he helped her cook and clean. He talked with her at the table, told her his plans for the next day and in return she tucked him in for the night. Clara lived a normal-ish life for what they were currently living in, but she wasn't happy and Tommy could sense that

Things started to change, and Tommy wasn't a fool to change..

He had been there for a week when he started noticing things, each day he asked time and time again. *"When can we leave?" "When can we go find my family?"*

And each time she told him, *"You can leave anytime you want. I'm not ready to go yet."* And each time he stayed.

She hadn't been able to do a lot recently, having him do most of the work since she had to sit down and no matter how concerned he got she always waved him off.

"I'm old Tommy," She would say slowly as if talking took away her ability to breathe, "Life isn't kind to me anymore."

And Tommy would pout before he went to do what she told him, not once noticing the sad looks she gave him in return. Tommy didn't understand what was wrong, and in the second week he grew irritated.

"Clara, we have to leave sometime!" He would whine to her as she sat on her special chair not moving, and she would look at him with a sad smile.

"If you wanna go you can, I'll catch up." She said holding his cheek, Tommy only whined more before moving to play with Cow. Because he knew for a fact she wouldn't catch up if he left her behind.

She started needing help up the stairs, help into bed and help out of bed. There wasn't anymore breakfast once the third week came around, and soon Tommy started to be the first one out of bed.

But never one to give up, he tries again.

"Clara, can we go yet?" He started asking again, sitting up on her bed as he helped braid her hair.

She only slowly shook her head, "You remember when I said sometimes you have to make tough decisions Tom?" Clara mumbled staring up at her cracked ceiling.

Tommy nodded, not understanding what she was getting at.

She hummed small, "I think it's time you have to make a tough decision sweetheart." She told him, and once Tommy got done with her hair he was asked to bring her something to eat.

Tommy only understood what she was getting at when he got into his bed, she was telling him again he could leave or he could stay.

His tough decision was if he was going to pick her or his family, but she was his family. And he had no idea what he should do next.

"Cow, you'd go with me if I left huh?" Tommy asked the cat one night, placing food into his bowl as he did.

Cow only ate, not responding to him once. When Tommy had turned to look at the empty chair Clara usually would've been in, he saw nothing.

Because Clara stopped getting out of bed, Clara stopped coming downstairs and she stopped leaving her room.

*"Life isn't so kind anymore."*

Clara was old, he knew that and she knew that. But she was fine when he showed up, she would be fine when they left.

*Papa, I don't know if Clara's coming home with me anymore. She's really sick and I don't know what to do.*

*I tried making that soup you use to make me when I got really sick, but I forgot how. She won't eat the tomato one.*

*I know she's coming back with me and I'm just scared over nothing.*

*But she's not doing okay, and I'm scared of seeing her become one of the monsters. She doesn't deserve that dad, she deserves to live.*

*She deserves to come home to a family that's gonna stay with her.*

---

Stress has become a common feeling in his family lately, Phil realizes as he leans on his son's door.

"Techno, could you *please* just come out and talk?" Phil tries laying his head against the wooden door sadly. He doesn't get a response.

The house had grown tense again, Wilbur still convinced he had killed Tommy along with Phil worrying over finding his son and guiding a community. It's better to say that no, there hasn't been a sweet family moment between them at all recently.

Wilbur screaming that Tommy is dead never helps, Phil yelling at Wilbur won't help and god knows how Techno was feeling.

*" Because no one gave a shit how I felt about this?!" His son screeches watching as they both grow shocked at him for yelling, "Not once have either of you asked if I was fine, it's been me baby-sitting you both!"*

*Techno started pacing back and forth wringing his braided hair as he did, "No no, it's been me checking on you both. Me making sure you guys eat and sleep, making sure your mental health's have been fine!" He continued pointing at them both as they wilted farther away.*

*"Tech-" Phil started reaching for his son, who only backed away with a glare.*



*"Tommy is my brother too!" He cried out making them both flinch away again, "I lost him too you know, I'm worried too! But neither of you gave a shit to see if I was fine!"*

*Wilbur walked up to him, tears streaming down his blotchy face. "Techno I'm so-" He tries only to be pushed back before he can even touch the boy.*

*"YOU DON'T GET TO SAY SORRY!" Techno shouts with a curled lip crying, "Not- not when you've been shouting in both our faces about him being dead. Not when you've given up, you don't get to apologize."*

*Turning to Phil he only cries more, "And I get it I do, everyone's stressed and worried. But god do either of you think I don't get upset over this? Or does everyone forget I exist?"*

*"You guys aren't the only ones hurting, and I can't keep being that comfort for you both when I have nothing to lean on in return!" He sobs before rushing up the stairs ignoring their shouts, the last thing they hear from him is the slam of his door.*

*Nothing else comes after, and Phil has to hold Wilbur as he sobs.*

*He sends Wilbur up to his room with the promise of talking later, and that's why he was there now begging for his other son to come out.*

He knocked again not knowing when to give up, "Please just talk with me, I'm here now ok? I'm listening, just talk." He begged once more, trying to hear even the slightest of movement in the room.

...

*"Why didn't you care before.." Techno's voice, though muffled and quiet, breaks the silence.*

It doesn't comfort him like he thought it would've, not when he realized he failed another son.

"I- I did care, just not in the way you needed. I focused on everything else and didn't realize you were hurting, and I'm sorry." He whispers sliding down the door until his body connects with the floor, "I haven't really been a good dad lately huh?"

A sad laugh hits the door, and he hears little quiet footsteps stop before sliding down the door just like he had.

*"Not really no, you've just been really focused lately so I can't blame you."* Techno responded, And Phil could imagine how he had looked at that moment.

Giving up, red eyes and a broken hurting smile on his face. Leaning onto his arms as he curled into himself, the image hurt Phil's heart.

Sighing he rubs his eye's harshly, "But you can, I knew things were hard with you yet I didn't think you were hurting all because I didn't see it." He mumbled out.

Nothing came after, as if Techno wanted him to keep going. And he did.

"I forgot you just, well you don't do emotions. You wait until you break, you show signs and yet I ignored them." He admitted with a heavy heart, watching as the light faded from Wilbur's room.

The door opens and he almost falls, yet when he catches himself and looks up he sees the tired form of his son. No matter how old or young the boy could be, he sees that little boy he raised all those years ago.

He sees his son crying, and the second Techno reaches for him. Phil brings him into a tight hole and let's the boy cry.

*"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. "* He whispers into the boy's hair, holding him tight as they sit there and cry, "I'll do better I promise."

"I just- I wanted you to help me. I needed someone to be with *me*." He broke looking past his dad's shoulder right at where Tommy would've been staying, "I just *needed* someone."

Phil only whispers I know, he whispers his sorrows and his promises. And Techno only cries, allowing himself this comfort knowing it could be his last.

He allows himself to break, because he believes he won't get this chance again.

He had been hurt too, he was hopeful too. They weren't the only ones who were hurt when no kid was brought to them, they weren't the only ones who suffered through Tommy's disappearance.

They weren't the only ones who blamed themselves, Techno had blamed himself since day one. Techno had suffered the second Tommy was rushed away from him, he was suffering too.

But no one ever noticed, and by tomorrow he knew deep in his heart they wouldn't notice still.

But for now, he lets himself be the one that's comforted. He allows this to happen all because he needed this, even if it wouldn't happen again.

*He wasn't the only one that was giving up on the boy either, But he will never admit it out loud like everyone else has.*

---

“Have you made your decision yet?” Clara asked again once he brought up her food, today had been a good day for them both. Though not as good as he hoped for it to be, she was actually moving around and didn’t need his help all that much.

She still couldn’t go down the stairs though, but Tommy takes what he can get. It was like she had this giant burst of energy, both happy and thankful for it.

He shakes his head, placing the tray onto her bed before he climbs up. “It’s still the same, I’m staying till you get better.” He states, stealing a piece of her apple she asked for.

She only sighs, eating her food as Tommy chats about whatever he can talk about. He talks about everything and nothing, talks about how far they had to go and what they would stop at.

He once asked if she could just drive them there, and all he got was her telling him the last time she ever drove somewhere was when she was forty-six and had someone try to steal her dog right in front of her.

*“Two cops couldn’t stop me from busting that assholes back gates out, I might’ve gotten my licenses snatched away but I got my dog back now didn’t I?” She cheered out after she showed him the only picture her friend had gotten of that night, which was her proudly smiling as she was put into the cop car.*

*Tommy had immediately called her the only woman ever, and she took that title with pride.*

And apparently because she’s never been behind a wheel after that, she didn’t feel safe driving in a car with a ten year old. Which was a bad excuse but he let her have it.

She coughed, batting at her chest before she spoke softly.

“Tommy,” She starts up, “I think It’s time you just go hun. A tough decision doesn’t mean picking the easiest option, it means you have to do what you know is best for yourself.” Clara

says, placing the tray away from her, staring at Tommy sadly.

He reaches for her hand, which she gladly takes with a sad smile.

“My son didn’t like leaving me behind in this mess, but he had a new family to care for.” She explains tightly holding his hand even as he started to tear up, “And I was always meant to die sometime, even if it meant I was alone.”

“But you aren’t dying? I’m here, I’m not leaving without you.” He cries begging for her to give him the answer he desperately needed.

Yet that smile stays the same, warm and welcoming. Hiding away her deepest pain, her deepest secrets. And she cries with him, wiping away his tears as it streamed down fast.

“You just can’t ever pick the easy route huh?” She laughed wetly making him giggle just the same, “You have a family waiting for you Tom, Don’t make them wait any longer all because of a dying woman.” She finishes, and Tommy glares up at her through tears.

“You are my family though Clara, I’m waiting for you.” He demands, leaving no room for back talk.

She brings him into a tight hug and sobs, he cries with her and they don’t let go. Tommy did find a family with her, she cared for him and showed him everything a grandma was supposed to show. She took care of him, she laughed with him, she teased him. Clara was his family, and Tommy was her family just the same.

But a time comes where you have to use a different tactic, and Clara gives up trying to be truthful.

“You know what? Tomorrow I think I might get up and make us breakfast.” She whispers, pulling away with a breaking look, “You feel like making homemade pancakes like I promised?”

Tommy brightens at that, ignoring how she changed the subject on him just like that and nods. “You said I can help flip them, remember?” he asks moving away from her, wiping his left over tears fast.

She laughs, though it ends with her holding her chest with a pained look she still laughed. “Of course, I'd never forget. But you have to promise me something too, okay kiddo?”

He makes a questioning noise, flinching at the serious look she gives him in return.

“You promise me this, you survive. You don’t die and you get home to your family. If you can do that for me, I’ll let you change Casper’s name to Cow officially.” She says, holding his shoulders wheezing at the fast motion, “Don’t you dare give up, you march your ass home and you show the world that you lived.”

“And you’ll come with me right?” He asks just as seriously, and though it’s hesitant as if it pained her so she agreed. “Then I promise, I’ll show the world that I lived and you will too.” He speaks with a grin, and that night he’s shooed away with the false promise of a dying lady who couldn’t fulfil her own.

Here’s the sad thing about this world, it ended a long time ago and sometimes people aren’t so fortunate when it does. Families are destroyed, loved ones are murdered and turned right before you. A father won’t see you as his child anymore, only a moving bag of meat the monster can eat without worry. People become crooks, they steal and they murder you cold blooded.

You are given hope, the hope wraps around your lungs tight and shows you this world of false serenity. You walk towards it ready to live again, and the world turns dark as thorns and flowers grow in your lungs, choking you slowly as you try and try.

Doctors leave and you’re left with a failing heart. There's a reason Clara’s family left her behind, a reason she never leaves her front porch. There’s a reason Clara had lived as normally as she could since the world crashed and burned. Whatever god had existed never planned for her to live longer even if the world didn’t turn into a monster seeking human life.

*“There’s a blockage that’s, well ma’am it’s not helping the blood flow properly. It’s not an easy fix, but we can still try.” The doctor’s tell her, they explain her heart isn’t able to work properly because of this and they did try to give her hope.*

*“We can take a loan out, pay for the surgery Mom. Emily won’t mind it.” Her son begged, he tried his best she would give him that. But Clara made her peace with it, still she agreed just to give him the same peace.*

*Maybe she wasn’t ready to die yet either, but she refused to state that out loud.*

*And just as one expected, things didn’t go right. The world ends and there’s no hospital or lights to make the surgery become true, and Clara accepts that she’s dying.*

*“You- You can still come momma, we can stay until..until you-” He pleaded as she told him to go, go before it got too late for them to get saved.*

*She only smiled, placing her hand right where his heart was, “I’ll still be there ya dumbass, but you have a wife and kids to protect. My time is done with and we know this, it’s just time to accept it.”*

*“But mom-”*

*She only shushes him, pulling away with a tight smile. “You know me going won’t do any of us any good, I love you and I always will. But as your mother I’m telling you it’s time to go, don’t lessen your chances of living all for someone who won’t live long.”*

He had hugged her tight, crying into her shoulder as she rocked him slightly that night. And as much as it hurt, she’s glad he never said goodbye. She’s glad she woke up to an empty house, a note saying they loved her and Casper meowing at her feet. She cried. That's true, god did she wish she could’ve gone.

Clara was offered a false sense of that serenity, of that promised land where she could've had a bigger chance to live. It's yanked away as fast as it's given to her.

She's a mother and she's a grandmother, letting them go was harder than dying. But she was wise and she knew it was for the best, Clara made her peace with dying alone. But hell she refused to die a sad lazy old lady, so she sucked up her misery and continued living a normal-ish life.

Tommy showing up wasn't on her list, and she had originally planned on sending him off the next day. Somehow though the brat had a way of working himself into others hearts, and the mother in her screamed at her when she tried to send him off. And sue her for being lonely, it was nice to have another soul to chat with.

*Maybe for a moment she had forgotten she was dying, maybe Tommy had brought back that fake promised land for her and she didn't regret it one bit.*

Tommy undoubtedly, no matter what he said, was still a kid. God in her eye's he was still a baby, a small child lost in a cold cruel tainted world searching for his family, accepting her as his family just as fast. Tommy's seen enough, she knew it from his gestures, but he was still naïve to the entire truth.

And maybe she was a tad bit selfish for not letting him go before they both got attached, but when she started growing weaker and couldn't even get out of bed? She knew where she made her mistake.

*The only thing she regrets?*

She lived in a hopeful lie, allowing herself to show the boy life tricks and cooking up a meal she wouldn't eat alone. She watches a loud child run down her stairs, running around her house playing as if life was normal still. He teases her and she teases him right back.

*That one regret she knew she would feel?*



Tommy reminded her of her son, back when he was small and young having to rely on her half the time, and maybe she was happy about that.

It's weird knowing when you were dying, it's like a quiet voice calling for you to come home. Starting out so small you barely notice it, growing louder each day and soon the warmth it would bring starts to freeze you over and claws at you even if you fight. Clara wonders what else people heard when they died, but she hears her husband calling for her. She sees him waiting for her to come back to him, patient yet demanding like the old fool he was.

She knows it's cruel to promise Tommy something she couldn't give, but she knew he wouldn't leave and Clara couldn't wait anymore. She had no more time left, so when Tommy went to leave for the night she asked for just one last hug and she basked in the last amount of warmth she knew she would ever get. She cries as Tommy closes the door, and oh does she beg that he won't see her dead.

*Her one god damn regret.*

But she knew that come tomorrow morning when she didn't get out of bed he would come asking for her, he would find her limp and pale. He wouldn't ever get an answer from her again, and it hurt so much. Tommy would find out she lied, and maybe he would be mad at her for it. Maybe he would cry, mourn the loss of what she could've been.

Yet when she closes her eyes, her husband's voice had never sounded louder, laughing for her as she reaches for his hand. She hears her son and her grand-babies welcoming her home. Clara finally accepts her husband's hand, leaving behind her body with one last breath without a second thought.

*Was not telling him goodbye.*

Unknowing of what happened, Tommy lays in his bed with a flashlight shining down on his notebook writing happily with Cow beside him.

*Clara finally agreed on leaving with me! With her I know it won't take long for me to finally come home, I know I've said that a lot but I really mean it this time!*

*Also dad she said if I got there Cow's name could finally be real this time, so that means he's really mine. I promise I'll take care of him, you don't gotta worry. Cow's a good cat, he's very cute so you can't say no.*

*I can't wait for you all to meet Clara, she's so cool dad. She's even cooler than you, which is a lot cause you're really cool but don't worry I still love you more! She even promised to let me flip pancakes tomorrow, you never let me do that!!!*

*It's short this time but I want tomorrow to come already so I'm sleeping now. I can't wait to see you guys <3333 please like Clara, I really want her to stay.*

*BYE BYE!*

He closed the book softly, placing it on the old wooden nightstand beside his bed before he curled up next to the purring cat. "You ready for an adventure huh? We can find you all sorts of cat toys, I'll even let you pick." He whispers giggling when Cow headbutt's him, "Good kitty, goodnight Cow."

Tommy falls asleep hopeful curled up to his cat, he dreams of his family driving to Clara's house laughing along the way as Cow takes in all the sights. It's a sunny day and Phil has on that weird old people radio that they all secretly hate, yet they still sing along. It's a good dream, yet when he passes by a group of sparrows watching him the sun dims slightly.

Tommy wakes up to the sun shining on his face, and a thump coming from Clara's room.

---

Sam is easy to annoy, he had always had a short temper ready to burst at the slightest poke. He's lost homes because of it, been left behind for it. Ponk had been the one person that accepted that sometimes it got too much and he would snap, in those times they left him

alone and for others they saw it as rude. For Sam he was thankful, Ponk knew when he needed to be alone just as Sam knew when Ponk needed comfort.

Sam is so easy to annoy, that it took one sound of a gun being loaded for him to snap fast.

Sam points the gun higher, watching as the man in his group shakes the closer it gets to his face. "You must think I'm some dumb shit huh?" Sam chuckles stepping closer, ignoring the shouts his other teammates give.

"Thinking I wouldn't notice when one of you tried to pull a fast one on me like that? Acting as if I'm some dumb guy who cant hear a *fucking* gun being pulled out?!" He shouts louder, taking in the cries the man gives as he presses his own gun harshly on the man's temple. The others beg him to stop, but he's not some push over who lets things like this go easily.

"I swear- It wasn't even my idea!" The man squeals falling onto his backside, yet Sam only tilts his head. "They planned it, not me!"

Sam only hums, turning slightly to stare at the others who flinch at his burning gaze, "I see, Phil's gonna like that one huh." he laughs out, kicking his foot towards the man on the floor, "People he saved trying to ruin the plan to bring home his son? For what, I don't know but him and everyone else will love that."

They all send him a hateful look, turning away as he speaks as if the words burned into their skins. He hoped they did, Sam believes in paying people back for what they've done and he will forever stick to it. Phil saved Fran and he saved Ponk, Phil Saved the people Sam cared for and he knows if the man didn't step up these people would've died a while back. But instead of sitting down and knowing when to give up, he sees traitors rising up ready to bite.

"Next time any of you try something like this there's gonna be a bullet waiting inside all your heads." He snaps backing away before turning around to continue his search, "Be grateful I didn't shoot you all where you stood."

He doesn't bother waiting for them, instead he keeps on walking yelling out Tommy's name hoping it would be answered. He wonders what the boy was like, if he was scared and quiet or a little spit fire ready to wear him out. He hopes it's the latter, god knows what the boy has seen now.

A town back, Sam found a small stuffed spider just sitting in it's stall waiting for the next kid that was supposed to come in and take it in. It was cute, had red little beaded eyes and it was soft to the touch. He could've left it behind, he would've if the thought of having some kind of peace offering for the boy was there. So now in his bag a spider lays waiting for a kid to hold and love, a kid Sam won't give up on.

*Even if he goes back with less people and one kid, no one would care if they died. Not if he told them what they tried to do, what they tried to get him to do, If Sam didn't kill them the others just might.*

---

Tommy gets out of bed ten minutes after the thump, Today they were gonna have pancakes and they would pack up and leave. He leaves the room five minutes after he gets up, dressed in clothes ready to start the day, he was gonna get to flip pancakes today.

He doesn't walk in her room when the thumps continue, assuming she was getting dressed and god knows he didn't wanna walk in on that. So Tommy walks down the stairs with a hop in his step, he feeds Cow and cleans up the living room from last night. When another ten minutes go by he washes the dishes, he didn't wanna rush her, not when he knew she was still ill.

He remembered what it was like for his dad when he had just gotten over the flu. They all immediately tried rushing him back into things and he immediately crashed again. They all felt bad for it, Wilbur and techno both being the "parents" that time where one took care of Phil while the other watched him. It was fun, but they still learned to be patient.

But the thumps grow more quiet, as if she was crawling. But Tommy goes outside for a minute, everything is fine and if she wasn't downstairs when he came back in he would check

on her. For now he waters her garden and her rose bushes, he lets Cow roam around and soon half an hour passes and all the plants are watered and taken care of.

“Cow, buddy let’s go in okay? Clara’s gonna cook today.” He shouts, not loud enough for anyone else to hear but loud enough where he knew Cow would. He does and soon a small cat rushes past him, running right back to his food.

And Clara's still upstairs. The house is silent this time, and it’s enough to strike fear into him where he bolts out the kitchen and up the stairs. *God forbid he let her fall by leaving to go outside, he would beat himself up over that till he died.*

“Clara...?” He whispers as soon as he gets to her door, faintly under the cracks of the door he sees a shadow move and another thump. “Clara, are you okay? You promised to fix breakfast today, remember?”

A groan, a raspy broken groan breaks past the door and the hair on his body stands up. He’s heard that before, the sound was all but familiar to him now. It was what a monster sounded like, when the organs didn’t work right and forced it to come out watery and gross, raspy and barely working. Clara’s groan sounded like that, and the shadow moved again.

“Can- Can you please answer me?” He pleads, shaking, reaching for the doorknob even though his entire body screams at him to run.

She could just be badly injured. He fights back with himself, she could be hurt and if he left no one could help her. If Tommy didn’t check, Clara could sit there and suffer.

So in a stupid move of believing the wrong thing, he turns the knob and slowly opens the door even when the groans grow louder and the sounds of crawling get louder as nails scratch against wooden floors. Oh he knew deep down the Clara he knew wasn’t there anymore, he knew it deep down and picked to ignore it.

It doesn’t stop the gut-wrenching scream that escapes his throat when he sees her reaching out towards the door, if he ignored the blood on her mouth and how pale she was or the way

some of her skin seemed bruised from a fall he would've believed it was just her reaching for him with a smile.

When he sees why she's on the floor, he has to lean over and puke out the food he ate last night. Her foot had somehow got caught in her blankets, twisting around until it was nothing but- Tommy couldn't explain it anymore he would never get that image out his head.

He ends up sliding down the doorway, holding his hand over his mouth to quiet the sobs that leave. He almost wanted to truly believe it was just her reaching to him, smiling at him and calling for him to get closer just so she could bring him into a warm hug. He knows he should run away, take Cow and leave now before she gets free and crawls after him.

But...he can't really move. He just stares at her and begs.

"Tommy.." He imagines she calls, not the groan that she let out.

"Tommmmy.." She growls-No, She says. She says his name like a normal living human being.

Tommy doesn't move even when the blankets start to slip off allowing her to crawl closer, reaching out for him as his hand reaches for her own. She just wants to comfort him, his brain supplies, *She wants to kill him, his heart screams.*

"I'm sorry-" He chokes out even as he reaches, her hand swipes at his own and he can't suppress the flinch he gives. "I'm so sorry.."

Clara was just playing a prank, Clara just wanted to scare him.

"Please stop.." He begs out moving back when she swipes again, the hands that once held him with the most secure safety he felt in so long only hold his own demise if he gets closer.

Clara wasn't playing a prank, she's dead and gone.

She moves closer and he cries out with a loud screech falling back into the hallway, "Just- Just stop!" He screams covering his eyes as he sobs.

Clara was a monster.

"You- You lied to me..You lied!" He accuses as his back hits the wall, he's far enough away but she's still trying to crawl.

Clara lied to him, she lied to him.

He sobs until his throat runs raw, distantly he can hear Cow meowing for him and he begs the cat to stay downstairs. Clara still growls and tries to get him, and he can't see the old nice lady that took him in anymore when he looks back at her.

She doesn't deserve this, she never deserved this. He stands up tipping over as he does, staring at her with blurry eyes. He doesn't wanna leave, not without her he doesn't.

He doesn't wanna leave her like that, he knows it's cruel and she didn't want that life. God Clara probably assumed she was going to heaven, a safe place away from here just like Tommy assumed all those weeks ago. Clara must have assumed she would die safe, and now she's here suffering in a body she can't control.

Tommy can't handle death, can't handle blood and he can't even stand the thought of hurting someone else. He's said this, others knew it. But Clara deserved better than to say, to stay whatever the hell the monsters were.

He knows he won't be a good person once he leaves, he might not even be himself anymore. But Tommy turns down the hall where he knows Clara kept her grand-daughters bats in the small closet at the end of the hall and he harshly grabs one, wiping away the tears.

This wasn't the Clara he knew anymore he will tell himself as he walks back to her room.

His Clara died last night, given away to the hands of mother nature and the earth itself. The Clara he knew no longer exists, and his hands tighten around the bat when he walks into her room.

He's mad when she reaches for him again.

*Monster.*

He's angry when this fake acts like her, trying to trick him into accepting her hand again. He raises the bat up with a sob.

*Disgrace. Monster. Murderer, freak, bad.*

Tommy never asked for this, he asked for a tenth birthday party with his family where he was happy and able to be a kid. Tommy asked to go back to school and get the girl he liked to check in the yes on his note, Tommy asked for his dad to fix him breakfast. Tommy asked for Wilbur to sing him his songs and add his own character into his weird little stories. Tommy asked to hear Techno ramble on about his favorite books, to help Tommy with his homework.

Tommy asked for a normal life, he's ten years old. He's a kid barely close to being an adult, nowhere near being a big kid. He asked for Clara to fix him pancakes and let him flip them, asked for Clara to come home with him where she would have a family that would never leave her behind no matter the cost or what she said.

He's sad, he's upset and he can't barely see with all the tears or the oncoming headache from all the rush of emotions he's feeling. And with one final echoing, gut-wrenching and painful scream he slams the bat down fast. *He apologizes, he begs for forgiveness, he pleads for her to come back and for him to wake up.*



Tommy slowly stumbles out of her room, bloody bat dragging behind him thumping on the floor leaving behind a trail. He doesn't look back when he closes the door or tosses the bat far far away. He doesn't register when he gets in the bathroom or when he wipes away the blood off his hands and face. He forgets he changes his clothes and tosses them out the window where he will never see them again, he packs up his things and tucks in the sheets from his bed before he leaves the room.

He does one last thing before he walks down the stairs, a marker left behind as he stumbles down and packs what he can silently. He packs Cow's food and some little toys up, takes the food he can get and places everything beside the front door. Cow waits patiently by his things, a little cat leash is tied onto him just to stay safe. And maybe a part of him believed Cow knew what had happened, he won't ever know the answer.

Tommy sets the table one last time, he waters the plants one last time and he picks one yellow rose off already hearing her shouting at him for doing it. It doesn't bring a smile on his face like he wished.

Once he finishes, Tommy picks up his things and the leash. Opening the front he tugs the leash one time, a boy and his new pet leave without looking back. Tommy doesn't bother to look where he was going, he just wanted to be far far away from the house and his deepest regret. What happened in that house would stay with him, he would only share the best of Clara. He wouldn't speak a word of what ended with her, what he had done in the end.

Tommy will only share what he knew she wanted to be shared.

And on a quiet lonesome street, the plants will blow in the wind and a little blue house that no longer lives will creak under the wind. A kitchen will never be used like it was originally planned to be, a dinner table will never have it's plates filled with food. A living room will be covered in dust and no one will sit in the one chair that belonged to one person, upstairs you will see closed doors. A bathroom with bloody footprints and stained sink left behind, a bedroom that was void of any human stands.

A bat will lay silently at the end of the hallway, and a door will tell you with harsh black ink that there's a sight you won't wanna see inside. A garden will rot away, and a simple yellow rose lays below a cross with a woman's name marked into it. *Clara, a really nice lady you would never regret meeting will be written on the cross. A small legacy that stays there until*

*the ground will take it over along with the house's memories, nothing left behind to keep it alive.*

*I won't be bringing home a grandma, not one that can be beside me anyway. But I can bring home stories, she can be in our minds. I can't leave Cow, not when he has no one else to stay with. You would've really liked her dad, she would've been a great lady.*

*I'm sorry, I really am. I think I say that a lot now, but I guess I'm just always sorry now. Please don't hate me, I don't want you to hate me.*

*I don't think I'm a good person anymore papa, I don't feel like one anyway. No matter what I do next, I think I'll always be a monster. I feel like the walking ones right now, and i don't think it'll ever go away, I'm not a good kid anymore.*

*I don't think I'm even a kid now, do kids do what I did? Do they see what I've seen? Can you even be a kid now with how everything is? I'm sick and I wanna stop everything. I don't wanna keep waiting anymore, I can't keep waiting.*

*I'm scared I won't be any of your Tommy anymore if I have to wait any longer for something I'm starting to believe won't ever come.*

*I'm tired dad.*

## Chapter End Notes

Tommy: Clara you're gonna come back with me right?

Clara: lol

Tommy sweating buckets: rIGHT?

((All of you showed weakness in the comments last chapter, I now hold cow hostage. Anyway dropping this and running cause I refuse to be taken down by pitchfork people, Clara was always planned to die but be happy Cow stays alive cuz i got attached to an idea i had SO BE HAPPY. I got somewhat attached to clara but she was planned death from the beginning so whoops.)) DON'T BE TOO MEAN IN THE COMMENTS USE TONE INDICATORS SO I KNOW I'M NOT ACTUALLY BEING SCREAMED AT I GOT SCARED WRITING CLARA'S DEATH LMAOOO

# And you can rest now I will not weep

## Chapter Summary

Only thing you get is prepare the tissues, this chapter starts up the move towards ending :)

**((TW: Near death experiences, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempt??? you'll understand, heavy injuries and talks about bloods and wounds, Guns. If theres anything i missed please let me know!))**

## Chapter Notes

follow my twitter i'm trying to create an army >:) <https://twitter.com/Idespisemilk?t=mjx1uAQHpIzenxxq7VL5Q&s=09>

also yeah remember when i said i wanted to make a playlist for this story? I did it. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3iakDgKcY8ZWQ1Xnz8KgsB?si=a4eec15b12e640bf> have fun cause i'm trying to make each song fit each chapter

ANYWAY PAY ATTENTION TO THE TAGS BEFORE YALL SCREAM AT ME  
Cow still has plot armor tho dw.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Forgiveness is a hard thing to earn, Tommy knew that for a fact. If he got in a fight with a friend, sometimes he found it difficult to forgive them. If he got upset with his family, he would've stayed mad until they earned it. He would hold a grudge over anything no matter how small, that's how he worked.

Forgiving others is a hard choice, but forgiving yourself is harder. You can easily accept someone's apology compared to your own, forgiving is one thing until it's you that needs to be forgiven. Tommy learns this one along the way. Forgiving himself is hard when he didn't feel like he deserved it. Looking at himself and saying, it's ok I forgive you for what you've done, it was hard and he couldn't do it.

Not when it was him, not when it felt like he didn't deserve to be forgiven for anything. He didn't deserve to forgive himself if the ones he hurt couldn't be there to forgive either.

Tommy is a walking monster, alive with a beating heart. He wasn't a good person anymore, he couldn't allow himself to be forgiven.

How's it feel to be a monster? Unworthy of salvation and love, where the cold hands grasp at you as you're dragged deeper into a swirling black void of pure regret. What's it like to be unworthy of it all?

Tommy could say it's hard to be so deep in your own regret that you find yourself unworthy to be loved. He could tell you monsters aren't the thing that hides in your closets or under your beds, they're the things that walk this earth waiting for unsuspecting prey. The monsters are there, waiting for that one tiny slip.

He saw a sign a few miles back, one of those *"God will be with you, just accept the hand he gives."* and while his family had never been a religious one, never one for church or any of that type of stuff, Tommy wonders if God would still give him his hand, he wonders if the man was even real. He wonders if God was doing all this on purpose, if Tommy had done something horrible to deserve this.

*"God gives you what you pray for, you just have to wait." A girl he knew had told him once, back when Tommy had gone through a phase of thinking prayers were real. He had complained to her about God not hearing him, she was the only christian person he had known so he thought she would've had an answer for him.*

*He had only huffed, tossing a crayon at her making her squeal. "I've waited forever, I don't wanna keep waiting." and there was no more of that, she had tattled on him and they were forced to switch tables.*

Tommy doesn't think he believes in god, but he tries to pray again. Praying up to the stars above that everything will work out, that he won't have to walk anymore and his family was right there only a few more steps away.

He prays for forgiveness, for what he had done to Clara. He prays for help, and he gets no response.

Tommy doesn't pray anymore after that, tired of trying over and over only to realize nothing good comes out of it. He accepts that maybe he's a monster, that whatever existed didn't see him worthy of saving. It's true too, Tommy is a monster.

He may not eat people, but he murdered someone just like the others had. If he even did find his family, they would be forced to see a killer instead of who he was. His loving father would see Tommy as a monster, his brothers would be scared of him.

*(If only he had known the truth, that his hands were stained just like theirs. That monsters seek out others, he would've known his family had done worse. But Tommy doesn't know, he wouldn't have known. They wouldn't have known, it would stay hidden.)*

They tell you everyone is worthy of salvation, and maybe Tommy's family was. Maybe they were allowed to go and Tommy had never been allowed from the start. He stops talking to Henry, he doesn't even know if he still has Clarence, Cow walks beside him most of the time. Sometimes he carries him, and there's time where he apologizes into the cat's fur for taking away his mom.

Cow never understands, living unaware of his new life and who he lost because of Tommy. He secretly wishes the cat would understand, that the cat would claw at him for what he did.

When he doesn't take care of himself anymore, he makes sure Cow lives. He owes both Clara and Cow that much, they deserved that peace more than he had. He doesn't eat unless he truly needs to, and his notebook starts to fill.

He's told god is forgiving, but Tommy doesn't believe that anymore.

*What will I leave behind when I die? Who comes to get me then?*

*Everyone dies, but what do they leave behind? Am i just gonna leave behind this book, is that all i am now? I don't want to be found a monster, or well i didn't.*

*But now there's not much of a choice there, no matter what I'll still be a monster dead or alive. I would leave my family behind, Cow too and Henry But i don't*

*I don't know what else to write anymore. Just don't hate me if I'm found, whatever I am if I'm found please still love me.*

*please*

He knew that he could've let Clara stay a monster, knew he never had to raise that bat towards her in the first place. He had another choice yet he picked the one that would've ruined him. There was a moment, a split moment, where he thought "What if she was actually alive? What if it wasn't real?"

There's the unwanted thoughts that wonder why he had the courage to kill her, but didn't have it to bury her. *Why could you handle hurting someone yet couldn't stand the sight of what you've done?* It plants its words into his brain *why why why*.

"Because I was angry." He would say back, "Because I'm just a kid."

There's times where he hears her, times where he hears her laughing and oh will he run towards it hoping she was there. Times where he thinks he sees her, standing there waiting for him to come with her. Each time he knows she's not, that there is no one there calling for him.

No one to accept his sorrows, to listen to him mourn. No one to yell at him for what he did, for just leaving her like that.

Tommy starts to realize he's losing his faith, that he's started to fall into his head the more he walks. Tommy notices he's started to lose himself, and maybe it's what he deserved.

Monsters never deserved a happy ending, and Tommy felt like he would never get that small chance of one anyway.

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Phil had ended up forcing them all to have a talk one night, telling them they have to let him know they were hurting instead of hiding it away like Techno had done. Telling them he can't help them if they don't tell him what was wrong, telling Wilbur he can't keep saying Tommy was gone and that it did nothing but hurt them all more.

"Just because you gave up on him doesn't mean we are." Techno spoke out after Phil, picking at the table underneath his arms, "Tommy may be a kid but he's still strong, what will he think when he finds out you gave up on him like that?"

Wilbur only turned his head, not answering either of their questions.

It only served to make his twin more angry, and maybe Wilbur deserved the harsh words given to him after that. Maybe he had deserved the way Phil seemed to turn a blind eye to it, because he knew his son was in the wrong and deserved the words that stabbed deep into his skin.

"I hope you hurt when he comes home, I hope you admit you were wrong." Techno spat out, standing up abruptly as he slammed his hands on the table glaring at his brother, "He deserves more than us giving up on him, you know that Wil."

He did. Oh god did he know Tommy had deserved so much more. How could you tell someone you gave up on them? How could you stand and look at someone who had fought their way back to you and go "I gave up on you a long time ago."

How can you say "I gave up on you the same day I gave up on myself."



Wilbur doesn't say anything, and soon Techno went upstairs saying he had better things to do then wait up for an answer. So Wilbur ends up outside with his father, sitting on the old porch in silence. It's only when Phil sends him a look where he decides he can talk now.

There's a difference with saying the words you mean with a brother and a father, as a brother you were meant to protect and keep the other safe from your own pain. As a son you were meant to go towards your parents when you needed help, when you couldn't go through that pain by yourself anymore.

There's a reason Wilbur will only ever go to Phil, he might not be the best brother but he knew what was right and what was wrong. When his brother was already hurting, Wilbur knew he didn't need the added stress of the truth Wilbur held away from them.

So he goes to his dad.

And he unravels everything, all the secrets he held back.

"I don't think I've been fine for a while, dad." He admitted kicking at the loose board under his foot, choosing to not look at his father who looked blankly at him. "What I've been dreaming, the thoughts I've had? Those aren't normal things to think about."

The blank face the father tried to keep cracked, shifting into a more concerned one, "What- Can you explain them?" he asked slowly, carefully.

It's at that Wilbur gives a painful smile, looking at the gates that took away his brother. That hid them all like cowards, a broken promise that was never meant to be kept.

*"What's it like to be brave?" A younger version of him had asked once, pulling on his mothers pants waiting for an answer.*

*She looked down at him, rocking the two month old in her hands as she gave him that warm smile he wished he never took for granted. "Well, to be brave is to be smart. To protect, do*

*what you think is best for yourself and others.” She told him, petting his hair before she went to lay down Tommy.*

When she had died, Wilbur had ended up at Tommy’s crib, looking down at Tommy sleeping in his bed, unknowing of what he lost. What Tommy would never receive, and he knew he had to be brave for Tommy. If not for Tommy but for himself, he would protect and he would love.

*“To be brave, is to love and be smart.” He told the seven year old blonde, Tommy had scraped his knee after being too scared to complete a jump and when he asked why he had to be brave Wilbur responded, “To be brave is to know when the time is right, be smart and stay safe. Sometimes the things you have to do might be really scary, but there’s a point where you have to overcome that and go for it”*

*Yet he still held Tommy and smiled, “But you don’t always have to be brave if you have us.” He explained once more to the small boy, “Just sometimes when we can’t be there to be brave for you, that’s when you have to do it yourself.”*

And here he stood, thinking about the wrong things and making the wrong choices. Maybe he leaned on Tommy a bit too much, but he was the last thing he had of his mother. Tommy was his little brother he swore to protect, and here he was failing that one thing.

“I can’t, you wouldn’t understand if I tried Dad.” He said turning towards his father with a grim and cruel smile, “But I know if I have to bury a body, I might just be lost forever.”

The thing is, he could explain it. But how do you tell someone you want to open the gates and let hell rain on them all? How can you say you refuse to live on an earth without someone you cared for, he knew he wasn’t the only one in that thought either.

Techno wasn’t slick with it, he’s seen the writings. Just like how Wilbur dreamed of letting the gates open for the beasts to get in, Techno dreamed of painting a world red. Phil never hid his thoughts, they both knew the man would kill anyone if it meant Tommy came home. They all would, and they knew it wasn’t sane.

They knew how unhealthy it had gotten, how they didn't even cry over the murders they caused. Phil never flinched when he killed that man, Techno never cried when he took a limb and Wilbur never screamed when he washed away the blood. They weren't a normal happy loving family anymore, all it took was losing Tommy.

How sad it would be, for Tommy to come home and see them tainted and cruel. Never to him, no they would love and love, never hurt. Maybe they'd calm down, maybe they'd realize just what they've done and break. He would be able to run around the streets, make friends and play again and they would protect him this time.

But how can you tell someone you were ready to die with someone if they never came home? How can you say you're scared, but you're ready to open those gates and die with innocent people because you just can't handle another death of someone you loved.

He can't just admit he would've let all of these people die, all because he hated the thought that they got to live while Tommy didn't. He can't just say he would've been so far into grief and jealousy that he would have killed them all because Tommy was the only worthy one that should've had the chance to live.

Wilbur knew he wasn't a good person anymore, but what did being one do for him? No one could call themselves good anymore, being good got you killed just as being bad got you murdered.

There wasn't a right or wrong anymore, there's just you and the world. That's all it was now.

Their mother dying may have killed something tiny inside of them, But Tommy's death would murder them completely.

Phil frowned and brought him into a hug, staring past his son's shoulder even when he felt the tears pass through his clothes. "There won't be a body Wil, he's gonna come home alive." Phil whispers, rocking them back and forth slowly as if he was still that naïve little six year old who needed his fathers comforting words.

But yet, even Phil started to take Wilbur's side with it all. The difference with it, is while Phil was losing his faith he would never go through with his own thoughts if it meant his sons died in the process. Phil would have to move on if they found Tommy dead, if they never found him at all.

Phil would pick the heart-breaking path of staying alive, Wilbur would pick the sad path of dying. It didn't matter if they shared the same thoughts, in the end they would choose different roads and leave the other hurting more.

That's the silly thing about faith, you never know what happens when you lose it completely.

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Here's the thing that adults tend to forget. Kids might be naïve and not understand everything, but they took in what they saw.

Kids knew when something wasn't okay, but adults tend to push that away. "Oh you'll understand when you're older!" They tell the child, even when the kid understands enough.

Some do it for protection, some do it because they truly believe the kid was too dumb to understand.

Dream likes to keep things from Tubbo for protection yet it still annoys the boy.

Tubbo was only eleven but he knew nothing was ok, he didn't even believe Dream when he tried to convince him that it was. You don't see your mother die like that and think everything will be fine.

No one should see the world die all around you and think it's fine, or when your life is stuck behind a wall and it's gates with adults telling you you're there for your safety. No one can sit there and genuinely think everything's fine, and Tubbo wouldn't be one of the people that did.

He knew it wasn't okay, but he acted like it was for the sake of his older brother. He won't deny how he feels upset that his brother was risking his life for another kid, where Tubbo is told he isn't allowed out the gates because it's dangerous but Dream is?

Didn't matter that Dream was older, it's the fact that Tubbo could lose the only family he had left all for the sake of a lost kid. It wasn't Dream's fault the boy got lost, yet when he voiced his opinion everyone got upset at him.

It's only till he sees the boy's family where he realizes why Dream was doing it. They looked miserable and lost, all it takes is one thought for him to feel bad for them. *What if it was Dream you lost? What if it was you that was lost?*

Tubbo would've been doing the same thing if he lost his brother, so while he still feels upset he understands it now. They saved them all apparently, Dream and the others owed them that much.

"Why couldn't they just go search for him themselves?" He had asked right before his brother had left, "If they miss him that bad shouldn't they be the ones lookin'?"

Dream laughed, moving to ruffle his hair with a hopeless look, "They wanted to, but Ms. Puffy thought it best for them to stay here, if he was brought back they'd be here waiting." He explained moving past the boy to grab a bag.

Tubbo huffed and followed after his brother with a pout, "How long will you even be gone? I'm gonna be so bored!" he whines, clinging to his brother's pant legs as he did. It only gets another laugh out of his brother, though that one had sounded more tense.

"You'll have Sapnap, and there's other kids here you know." He sighed crouching down to look at his pouting brother, "I'll be back before you know it kiddo."

Tubbo only groaned, slinking down to the floor dramatically, "Sapnap doesn't like playing with me cause he's a 'big kid' and the other kids don't like me." he whines out rolling onto

his stomach when his brother had stepped over him, “I don’t understand why you guys are looking for him anyway, you won’t find nothing.”

Dream inhaled sharply, sending him a stern look, “Don’t say that, his family thinks he’s on his way here and I’m not gonna say no to that. Not after all they’ve done.”

“And if you bring home a body?” The younger asked definitely, feeling irritation rise up in his bones.

That got him yanked up, Dream glaring at him was enough for Tubbo to realize he said something he shouldn’t have. *If you can’t say anything nice, Don’t say anything at all his mother had told him one day.*

“We won’t, none of us will and don’t even try to say someone will.” His brother had demanded, letting go of him when tears started to build up in Tubbo’s eyes.

They were both kids, two kids who had lost so much in such a short time. They were scared, Tubbo was scared.

“You got to promise you’ll come back.” Tubbo had spoken after a few seconds of silence, raising his hand up with just the pinkie finger being left out, “If you can’t promise you can’t go.”

Dream hesitated, there was that small chance he wouldn’t. But he still linked his finger with the boy’s smaller one and smiled, “I promise I’ll come back, who knows maybe you and Tommy will make great friends.” he had said, and Tubbo was there to say goodbye. He was there to watch the cars leave and he’s there when they come back.

Maybe he and Tommy would make good friends, maybe Tommy would like Tubbo and not find him weird like all the other kids did. Maybe was a huge word to use, it brought a small chance of hope when used.

But when Dream comes back empty-handed the maybe seems less hopeful, when the other teams start to come back and there's no boy it seems fake. When he sees Phil and his sons look more dejected as time goes he doesn't believe anymore.

Ranboo made a good friend, when the boy had been found and brought back Tubbo at first thought it was Tommy. It wasn't and maybe he was a tad bit upset over it, but the boy ended up being great company and never judged Tubbo.

“When they find Tommy, we can be his best friends!” Tubbo had declared once to the other boy, “He can come here and have friends, it'll be so fun.”

Yet when it comes down to Mr. Sam's group being the last hope? Tubbo thinks he won't ever get to be a friend to a boy he won't get to know, all he would ever know of Tommy was the stories his family would tell.

He wonders what it would've been like if Tommy hadn't gotten lost, would they have been friends? Would they have anything in common or would they hate each other? Tubbo doesn't think he would ever get the answer, but he liked to think they would've gotten on well together.

Maybe they'd have a chance in another life, maybe Tommy could be happy in that life. He liked to think Tubbo would've been a swell friend, so he lets him and Ranboo both think that Tommy would've fit in well.

Even if the boy would never have that chance.

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He can't fully explain why he went to the roof, he could say it was for protection. He could say it was for the thrill. But really it was foolish, he could have gotten easily trapped up here and yet he still decides to go. Tommy just wanted to see the sky better, he just wanted to be up higher and see it. Staying on the ground was just a call for danger anyway, he deserved a small break.

So he climbs up the stairs even when his legs start to burn, he learned to ignore it anyway. He needs to see the sun, he has to see it just to know it's still there.

Techno used to tell him facts about the sun, he had to even explain why Tommy couldn't look at the sun without it messing his eyes up. But Techno tells him anything he asked, and Tommy wishes he could ask another one again.

*“What happens when the sun dies?” He wanted to ask so badly, he wanted to know what happened. Did a new sun come and replace the other, or would they be stuck under the night forever?*

When he finally reaches the top and opens the door, the once dark stairwell lights up, and Tommy feels his heart beat fast. It's there just waiting for him, calling for him.

It's beautiful, that's the first thing that crosses Tommy's mind when he steps onto that roof. Beautiful, amazing, god there was so much he could say yet none felt like it was enough for it. The sun had started to dip down, falling asleep slowly as if left behind an orange and pink sky, magical is a new word. Symbolic in many ways, yet he stands there with Cow and watches.

It reminds him of the beach Phil used to take them too during summer vacation, back when Tommy would walk the edges of the sand as the water hit his feet, collecting all sorts of shells with his dad while Wilbur would fight Techno in the water. Each time he found one Phil never failed to act proud over it, each time they left there were always two buckets filled with them.

*“The garden would look cool with them.” Phil responded once when Tommy asked why his dad kept them, “It's something we do together, it's only right I keep the memories of it.”*

Each year no matter what, once the sun started to set they did it. Each year they collected all sorts, each year his brothers would pick out their favorite and put it in a box. It's a core memory for Tommy, and he knows they'll never do it again.



There's a dying garden somewhere with shells sitting out, a box that will never be opened or added on and a beach Tommy will never see again.

A tired and grime covered boy and his cat stand on a rooftop alone as they watch the sky perform it's magic. Tommy wants to reach for it, and he does. He sets everything down, ties the leash onto his bags and tells Cow to stay there. *He knows the cat probably won't understand him, but Cow stays put.*

And Tommy steps closer to the edge, reaching for the lowered sun with a heavy gaze. A daze as he imagines himself floating towards the sun where it will be the most warm, A newly formed feeling grows inside him as he gets closer and closer. Engraving inside his heart as he reaches so high.

*Just a few more steps, and I can touch the sun.*

He gets lost in his mind, far too tired to realize anything just that he felt high enough to finally touch the sun. He loses himself without realizing, and it's only when his gaze shifts from the sun to the ground for just a second where he realizes. Just that one moment where his eyes saved him, he was only one step away from falling after all.

*But you can touch the sun.*

Tommy's hand falls fast as he screams out of fear once the height hits him, falling backwards harshly as his back connects with the harsh pavement of the roof causing him to gasp out. It takes the breath out of him along with the upcoming fear, he was so close to just dying.

It scares him more when he notices the only reason he was scared was because of the height, not because he could've died. That reels him farther away, back to Cow's side who headbutts him when he reaches him. The sun doesn't seem to get the mood, shining still even on it's way down and Tommy stays there for a moment to catch his thoughts.

After he calms down enough, he grabs everything and picks up Cow before he bolts, scared of what he would do if he didn't. He tries to stay steady as he runs down the long stairs, he tries to not cry when he reaches the bottom, and he tries to stay silent when he walks onto the streets alone.

The light starts to fade and Tommy feels tears slip down unwillingly, yet when he thinks it's safe to cry he hears it. The way the birds that stayed flew off as it neared, the dread that filled up inside of Tommy. Even Cow started to take notice of how wrong it felt, and when Tommy turned around he couldn't help the squeak that left his throat.

There behind him, stood the largest group he had ever seen of monsters. Heading right towards him, where he was in the middle of the street defenseless and tired. A large group that Tommy knew took over half the streets, maybe even squashing them into the buildings.

He takes one moment of horrific feelings to fall in before he runs as fast as he can, with a harsh grip on Cow and his stuff he runs with his entire life. He runs even when he sees more walking towards him, turns when an opening gets filled he runs past broken stores that he can't reach and knows he's safe in. He runs past corpses that will never move, he runs like death is on his heels. And he cries when he realizes he ran into a dead end.

He felt defeated for a moment, all that running and all that surviving would be wasted. All he's done would never matter, he would never matter. For a split second he's ready to give up, to accept he tried his best. Tommy was ready to accept that he couldn't run anymore, yet he looks at Cow and he imagines.

*His family waits for him with bright smiles, Clara telling him to survive. Cow who had so much more to do, He sees his father smiling at him so far away yet so close at the same time.*

*"You're almost there." He whispers with hands reaching out, light beaming behind him and Tommy swears his dad looked like an angel.*

*I miss you hitting the tip of his tongue, but his dad smiles as if he knew and the sun shines brighter. Tommy sees his father waiting, and when he sees the rotting flesh appear on his arm Tommy remembers why he was still going.*

*He didn't care if he died, didn't care if he became a monster. He cared about seeing them one more time, he cared about hugging his brothers and father alive even if it was for the last time. Tommy cared about finding them alive, not them finding his monster he leaves behind.*

*Tommy cares because he has to survive for them, he has to hug them and he has to at least say goodbye. He had to do that for them, they didn't deserve to wait forever.*

He looks back up, turning to take in his surroundings with a fierce glare, a new found adrenaline to live rushing through him. He didn't care if he had to run through them, Tommy was going home one way or another.

It catches his eye when both sides fill in when the monsters, and Tommy does the only things he can do.

He tries to survive.

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They hear a scream before it starts, a scream none of them did. And just as quickly as they started to go towards it the hoard came along.

“Fucking hell, that's a whole city of them.” Sam growled out from his hiding spot, ironic how they finally found someone else here and the monsters decided to show up,. And of course the bastards took off leaving him behind, Sam wondered what family they had because if they didn't no one would grieve them. Which works just fine with him, less of a chore.

Here's the thing, Sam hates waiting. Never been much of a patient guy, not in school nor in a workplace. He hates waiting and if he wants something done it gets done, so he refuses to wait in this mess any longer.

Not when there's someone else out there, not what's on the line. If he waits they could die if they even lived. He doesn't even know why they screamed or if they were a safe person, he just knew what it could be.

He had no idea when this would end, no idea where they had run too and now he was struck with fighting and hiding. Which would've been easy, if not for the fucking fact that there was a mass of them this time and he only had so many bullets. Didn't stop him from bulldozing through in the best way he could, at one point he had seen a garbage bin and considered hiding in it until he realized he wouldn't have time to do that.

So now he was stuck behind a counter watching from a small gap to see what was all out there. Hundreds of rotting flesh roamed the streets, searching for something. Sam knows that being out there was a death wish, hell being in here was still one. He was a smart man, and knew a losing battle when he saw one.

So he takes a second to wish good on Ponk, wishing that they would take care of Fran if he never came back. He hopes they could move on from him, be happier one day. This doesn't mean he was giving up, oh god no. Sam would walk through those gates with death on his shoulders with Tommy, Sam wouldn't die until he brought home a boy.

Soldiers don't give up on a mission, Sam wasn't gonna give up. He was however going to kill his group when he saw them, that was already planned. Maybe the beast got to them, he hoped they did.

He hopes whoever screamed lived long enough for him to find them. And with a new found death wish, Sam stands up as stares out the window into the crowd of unwelcoming hands.

*"His son's ten, not even one for half a year, Sam. He was nine when this started." Puffy tells him after she asked him to go, he had tried to deny it at first. It wasn't his problem until he found out it was just a kid.*

*"Do we have a path? Anything to go off on?" He had questioned as they walked back to his home, "Or are we searching for a needle in a haystack here."*

*"Phil- He's sure Tommy's trying to find them. He's positive that the kids making his way here." She answered back both stopping to let some kids run past, Sam watches her eyes soften at the sight of them. It's nice to see someone else able to act normal, so no one stops the kids from running around.*

*“He’s just a kid Sam, He deserves to be out here playing with other kids. Not whatever lays out there, not by himself.” Puffy whispers moving in front of him with a desperate look, “He’s a kid.”*

Sam scowls as he checks his gun, escape plans shooting all around his brain as he searches for any kind of distraction. He mumbles out a short goodbye if things go wrong and *Bingo*.

He grins dangerously, this is the thrilling part of his life. The gun moves towards the windows, and all it takes is one gun shot for the entire thing to shatter and gain enough attention.

*This is the fun part, And Sam lets out a loud cheer before he rushes towards his exit as the beasts start to crawl in getting stuck as more show up. Sam hates to wait, and if he was forced to wait then he was gonna be as dramatic as he pleased.*

“Let’s go fuckers!” He screams in glee, climbing onto the escape ladder as they fall in, attention being grabbed at the second. God he was gonna be so pissed if that person died and his group lived.

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Tommy knew there wasn’t any other choice to pick for an escape, but he’s a bit salty over it being a garbage bin of all things. Seriously once the adrenaline died and his brain focused on the smell of all things he felt like throwing a fit. Cow doesn’t seem happy with it either, nor the rat that Tommy ended up being roommates with.

Though he thinks the rat might actually like it here, it was just them she didn’t like. So on top of hiding from monsters and being trapped in a trash filled bin, he has to stop Cow from trying to eat the rat. He couldn’t even write anything, not when the only light he was given was from a flimsy flashlight that flickered out every second.

“ *Cow don’t you dare.* ” He whispered out harshly, reaching for the cat that was getting ready to pounce. “ *We can’t fight right now you dumb cat.* ” And he’s so sure that they’ve listened to

him once Cow calms down and goes to curl up beside him . He's a tad bit scared of making any kind of noise, it takes one mistake and all the monsters can crowd him in here forever.

But turns out he was worried about the wrong thing, so the second Cow laid back down a loud noise echoed from outside freaking them all out. He screeches when Cow's claws dig into his skin as the cat starts off with a yowl, the rat starts running around and now a freaked out cat starts to chase it and the bin bangs when they hit it.

Tommy can hear the monsters outside changing directions, he can hear them either go towards the other noise or start off toward him and he's so sure he's about to cry. He has to take the risk and open the bin up just to see, so as quiet as he can though it's wasteful when the other two make noises he opens up the top to see.

He can see a bigger opening, though there's some heading towards him he can bolt now, he reaches down for his things and starts to call for the cat when the rat decides to jump up on his arm and climb out the bin making him screech. Almost dropping his things when Cow climbs up him making him cry louder, and just like that the cat jumps out following after the rat.

"NO!" Tommy screams as Cow runs off, jumping out the bin as he shouts, "Cow stop- COW COME BACK!" his things bang harshly against his back, and it's there where he remembers what they were currently on as zombies turn at his screams. Another gunshot goes off, and Tommy bolts towards the exit trying to follow after his cat.

It's stupid and dangerous risking his life for an animal he knows this. But Cow's all he has left now, so now Tommy has to face a hoard as they reach for him. With harsh rotting hands that scream danger, he could feel them touch his face as he runs begging Cow to come back.

He can't even be blamed when he starts to cry.

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Sam ends up hopping roof after roof, pushing things out his way as he shouts for a distraction. The plan is to lead them far enough where when he runs back there's enough

room to safely walk in, yet that goes wrong when some change direction again. It's darker now, and Sam knows the danger gets worse once there is no light at all.

So he screams again, shouting for the monsters to listen to him just so he can lead them out. He even starts to raise his gun again when he sees it, there in the streets far away where Sam can't truly see is a little shape running and dodging past the beasts. As if they were searching for something, running from something.

It's a kid in a mass of them, it's a small kid that Sam knew caused that scream. His heart races at the thought, it didn't matter if it was *the* kid or not they were still unsafe in this. Rushing about trying to escape, so Sam does the one thing he can do.

He shoots twice, catching the attention of half the monsters facing the kid who looks towards the sound before bolting into a building. Cursing Sam starts to run back begging that the kid got in some place safe and protected, just until Sam could find them.

Focused on the kid, he misses a step and tumbles down rolling harshly against the roof's pavement knocking the air out of him. Everything was blurry as he tried to regain his sight, and that's when he saw how close he was to falling off completely. One more roll and he would've become monster meat for free, that scared him more than he liked.

"I..I'm gonna need some severe fucking anger management after this." He grits out as he lifts himself up with a gasp, groaning when he realizes he must've bruised his ribs in the process.

Huffing he leans against a railing staring down at the groaning mess of the dead, "And a fucking burger, this is just too much now." he sighs tiredly rubbing his eyes before he starts to move again.

If only things were that easy.

---

*“You’ll always be here with me right?” The toddler asked curling up in his older brother's lap, “You’ll stay and never leave, cause I’ll be sad if you go.”*

*The brother only laughs, setting the boy down gently who whines at the loss of touch.*

*“If I have to stay, so do you, so will Dad and Wil. We can stay but only if you do too.” Techno answers looking down at the boy whose eyes widened before nodding fast with a grin.*

*“I’ll stay forever.” Tommy promises, staring up at his three family members with determination.*

*“I’ll stay and find you.” He whispers to himself in the mirror. As a young boy clean and sane stares back at him with a grin, washing away leaving a tired, dirty and bloodied ten year old in his wake.*

*“I’m sorry.” He whispers to that ten year old, to the family that was waiting. And the world fades away.*

The bird flies higher as the noises ring out, and a story starts to reach the peak.

---

Phil a father of three, a widow of a wife he lost too soon. He never prayed, never begged for a god's help and not once has he read the bible. He doesn't pray when his dad passes, doesn't pray when his mother goes. He doesn't pray when his wife gives birth to the twins or when she gives birth to Tommy. He refuses to pray when he gets the call, a god never listened to him before they wouldn't have listened now.

Phil has never prayed once, so for the first time in his life he finds himself in the communities built in church. Listening to a priest preach god's word as others pray alongside the man, watching silently as the man talks about faith and hope.



Phil is far past asking for forgiveness by now, he knew the people in here knew that. He knows his sons are just as gone as he is, so Phil will never ask to be forgiven or to be blessed with a gift. The long haired blonde will never ever do this again, but for the first time in his life he folds his hands together tightly.

And he prays for his son's return.

The birds outside fly away from the church as the wind rolls in fast.

Wilbur sits outside waiting for his dad as the wind starts to grow faster, watching as people rush inside as the rain starts and he glances towards Techno who looks uneasy. They both hated being here, but Phil asked for them to come that it was a one time thing and once he finished they could go.

They say nothing when a pit forms in their stomach.

---

Tommy coughs when dust flies into his face after he crawled through a small hole to get into the building. He notices a small vinyl record on the floor when he fully gets in, and he holds in the gasp when he sees he came into a music store. Wilbur would've loved this, yet Tommy stays quiet knowing they could still get in.

Cow was still out there, ran off into a place Tommy couldn't reach and he felt guilty knowing he had to hide away leaving the vat out there alone with the monsters. He groans when he shifts up, moving to look out the window just to see how many were out there now.

A gasp catches his attention and he turns fast only to be faced with a gun pointed at his face.

"It's a fuckin' kid, holy shit." One of them whispers, Tommy can't see much but he makes out two behind the gun person, "How the hell did he get in here?" The other asks shifting from a defensive position to a relaxed one.

Tommy grits his teeth at the quiet insult, they didn't find him threatening

"There's..there's a hole I crawled in." He whispers, eyeing the gun now, which had yet to move away from him. He whimpers when they glare at him, as if him speaking was a curse itself.

"Hey- Hey that looks like the-" The one that first spoke starts up, wincing when the gun guy turns to glare at them, "I'm just saying, just look at the kid."

He wilts when they all look at him with judging eyes, taking in his appearance which makes him feel self conscious. He really wishes the gun guy would move already, yet Tommy focuses on trying to find an exit just in case.

They start whispering to each other, eyeing him every now and then while he shifts uneasily.

*"It could be the kid, just look at him, he looks like that bastard."*

*"And if he's not? What then, we get yelled at for bringing the wrong one there?"*

That's when they hear glass breaking, Tommy whines out louder when he turns and sees a bunch of them piling up at the window staring at them. He hears the curse yet he starts to move towards his exit only to hear the gun make a small noise.

He slowly turns back terrified, yet the gun guys there staring at him with wide terrified eyes as the gun points directly at Tommy's chest. Tommy refuses the thought that screams this is it, he refuses to die like this.

Not when he's fought so much , not when he's given up everything.

"Listen kid- you see those fuckers out there. You're smart, you know getting out isn't easy, you know that right?" The gun guy says hysterically, stepping closer when Tommy backs away.

"Wait- wait we can't just-" One of them starts up nervously only to shout when the gun shifts towards them.

The gun guy looks crazy, manic and ready to kill just to get what he wants and that scares Tommy.

He tries again to sneak off, just close enough to each of the stairs when the glass breaks again and everyone panics. It's here where Tommy realizes what they want from him, why they wouldn't let him just go on his way.

People aren't nice anymore, there's no laws intact to keep them nice and tame. No cops to rush at them, no jails to be filled with. This is a world of surviving or dying, you sacrifice everything and either come out on top.

Or you come out dead, one of the monsters or one of its food. You don't get that so-called happy ending, it never existed in the first place.

"It's just a business kid, you got to understand we just have to survive ya know?" The gun guy laughs out putting his finger on the trigger as Tommy shakes.

" *Please*, wait- wait please I have to-" Tommy pleads as he freezes, knowing if he runs he gets shot and If he stays he still gets shot.

*Phil stands behind the man with wide arms, he can hear his dad grow louder as time slows down and he pleads.*

"I won't follow you, I'll stay here just please don't!"

*Clara waits for him patiently, frowning at the sight she sees and the garden grows faster.*

He starts to hyperventilate, clutching his bag as he begs and he begs. "I can't just *die* , please not after all this just let me go!" He cries out, looking at them with blurry blue eyes. Two of them look away, one of them faces him head on.

*He's fought so hard, he's gone through so much. He's almost died so many times, so why now? Why now when he's so close to his goal, why now.*

The glass can only hold so much, and Tommy can only go so far. He breaks with the glass, and he bolts for it at the final crack as the gun goes off and the people start to run.

Hot searing pain burns through his arm as he screeches, stumbling sideways after the ringing fades out. He hears someone cuss, he hears the groaning get louder yet he reaches for the stairs.

The gun goes off again, and Tommy had never screamed louder than he had now.

*It hurts, it hurts it hurts ithurtsithurtsithurts*

He can't- won't die down here. He won't let them get him, so he climbs up even when his arm starts to numb or when he can't catch his breath.

He falls over when he reaches the floor, gasping for air as a hot sticky feeling runs down his arm and he crawls. He crawls even when the ground scrapes at his knees, he lifts up when he hears the monsters start to follow.

There's a door, it's so close yet so far. Right there and all he has to do, he distantly recognizes a scream from downstairs and the sounds of people cursing in fear.

He reaches when he hears Clara cheering him out, reaches when he feels the monsters creep behind him.

Everything fades out for a moment, and once he comes back he finds himself curled up in a corner of a strange room with his things tossed beside him.

It's hard to breathe he realizes, there's so much blood around him and oh god does it hurt. Tommy had never been shot before, not by a real gun anyway, not in the arm.

He tries to breathe again, he's only ever been shot by water guns or nerf guns. Never by real ones, never in the arm as a bullet went clean through.

Tommy...Tommy's never been shot in his stomach before either. He realizes that when he sees a hole in his shirt with red seeping through, that's why it hurts to move huh?

*He's tired.*

Tommy doesn't wanna go, he doesn't want to die. He was so close, and the tears started to build once more as he chokes.

*Just one tiny nap, it'll be fine.*

The sun was so pretty today, it was so welcoming. He wants it back, he wants to write about it. *He...he can do that can't he?*

The pain starts to fade, he's fine. He was okay, he just had to write about the sun so he reached for his bag only crying out in pain once. It's gonna be fine he tells himself, he was fine.

*The sun..what can he write about the sun?*

Tommy hopes his dad won't wait long, he just has to write about the sun and take one tiny nap and he'll be on his way again. He can steal Wilbur's bed and Techno's clothes again, they can see him again all he has to do is rest.

The pencil feels so heavy in his hand, there's blood getting on his notebook which he grimaces at. He just has to write about the sun, he has to tell them how pretty it was.

Tommy has too...he has to let them know the sun was amazing before it went out. He has to write just one more time tonight, tomorrow he'll find Cow and leave.

Henry's beside him, soaking in his blood as if it was a bandage. The sun was warm, the sun was welcoming. The sun was home, the sun was the beach, it was memories. It was helping Tommy find his way home, the sun was safe.

The sun's gone, and Tommy cries as the pen shakes in his hand, only writing two words before falling as Tommy loses his grip. He can't reach for it anymore, not when the pain gets worse or when the monsters bang at the door. He won't ever finish writing about the sun, he never wrote about the sun.

Tommy had to let them know, he had to say some kind of goodbye.

*Just for now, he will sleep just for now.*

---

Sam hears the gunshot, he sees his group rush out counting out one as they run towards the car and Sam panics.

They were leaving, they shot someone and they were leaving them behind.

That kid was in there Sam realizes, and he's never risked his life as much he did then. Jumping down the safety of the roof as he rushes towards the building in a panic, begging that they didn't hurt the kid. They didn't even try to call for him, leaving him behind for dead as well.

*God please don't fucking let that kid be dead in there he begs silently trying to find a way in without the beasts seeing him.*

*Just wait a bit more, please.*

---

Tommy wanted to ask what happened when the sun died, here's the answer he will never be told face to face.

When the sun dies, the world will end. It will grow cold and lost without that heat and light it once gave. Leaving behind those that loved it, those who needed it. When the sun dies there won't be another one, you can't replace what it used to be. When the sun dies, no one will know what to do and some will hurt.

People can't exist without the sun, they wouldn't survive it when it left them behind without a goodbye. When the sun goes away without a notice, they will freak out and worry. The sun gave them hope, the sun gave them peace and protection from the dark.

They're nothing without the sun, so when the sun's light starts to dim, others will as well.

Without him, the family of three will be nothing and the world will burn alongside them all.

*They tell you there's a valley where the sun will grow, of a boy who was far too tired for his own good that had been locked out. Kept with the moon's unforgiving night as punishment, he can see his family sitting in the sun's light waiting for him to come towards them. Oh how the boy tried, banging against an invisible wall and ramming his shoulder into it just to get that tiny touch of sun.*

*He tries for a long time, but little kids need their rest. Clara's calling for him and a lady he's seen in photos waits beside her. "You tried," they whispered sweetly as they held out hands waiting for him to run into them.*

*"You tried your best", they continue when he looks back at his family who only watched him with sad eyes. The boy was tired, tired of the misery and hurt the world had given to him. Tired of the failure he had become, he just wanted to know it was ok to go.*

*"Just for a bit dear." Clara whispers as his feet move without asking, "Just a little time, and everything will be fine."*

*Tommy may have been trapped under the moon's cruel night forever wishing on a prayer that would never come true, but he can see Clara and he sees what he assumes is his mother. The sun doesn't feel that warm anymore as he closes the distance leaving behind the path he had tried to walk.*

*"You were so close.." He hears his father whisper to him. No longer is there a hand stretched out for him, Phil understood.*

*Tommy doesn't want to go, but the moon has never given him a choice before and she wouldn't now.*

*There are stories that start with a happy little life, there's stories where the protagonist wins in the end and reunites with the loved family. There's happy endings just as there's bad endings, There's the ones who grow tired and accept death's hand, ones who fight against it and ones who do nothing but wait.*

*There are stories that start with, "Today will be great, I will finish this task and go home to my family." giving the hero hope for it's ending. A notebook full of dark secrets and adventures they went on starts off with a young boy who was far too naive to go through this pain.*



*The notebook starts off filled with hope, excitement for it to finally be put away for good. There's the part where it hits its high point before the story drops off, and the reader will read those notes and listen to a boy's sad little tale. They start off thinking the same thing as the young child, this boy will live and find his salvation.*

*And there's the stories that end with a heart-breaking phrase, left behind with no continuation. No more stories to write, no more tears to be shed.*

*There's a story that ends with, "I'm sorry." droplets of tears and blood showing the story of why there wouldn't be anymore to read. There's that bitter truth that the happy ending won't come true, not when the world rages and the dead walk.*

*You start out thinking once you've finished that book will be no more of use to you, that you'll run into your family's arms and finally be able to rest that part of you. But the goodbye you thought would have been written down isn't the one you hoped for.*

*The innocence you have is ripped away, you aren't a simple little child waiting for a birthday party as life stays the same. You don't stay naïve and you witness the world burn before you as regret buries itself into your bones. You realize that the happy ending you craved was too far away to reach in the first place.*

*There is no more normal life anymore for you, you aren't a nine year old waiting to turn ten in the way you were supposed to.*

*Instead you are a ten year old boy who laid limp and cold in the corner of a room you've never seen before as the dead raged on.*

*His family leaves his sight, and Tommy turns around walking slowly towards the two waiting for him as the dead flowers brush against his knees.*

*Tommy knew he had to go now, he knew he fought as hard as he could. But Tommy was never meant to win in the end, he was never meant to find his family. The young boy was meant to die, he was supposed to die in that car.*

*Clara was supposed to kill him when he found her dead, he was supposed to let her grab him. Tommy was supposed to fall off the roof, he was supposed to let those monsters get him.*

*He fought as hard as he could, yet he never stood a chance in the end of it all.*

*"And you will be loved, even when you go through the hardest thing's you will forever be loved." His father had told him once, back when Tommy blamed himself over things he had no control over. Back when Tommy wondered why he never had a mom.*

*Tommy wonders if he's loved now, if they would love him forever even when he died.*

*He walks not knowing the answer.*

*And the dirty cheap notebook he stole away lays beside him, never to be touched again.*

## Chapter End Notes

Tommy: this my home, over in the corner we have cow, this corner we have trash.

Tommy staring at the rat: and over here we have the guard dog, she has rabies.

((IF YOU SEE A TYPO SHUSH I'LL FIX IT LATER. the masculine urge to end the entire story here was present tonight besties but i promise its not, I know it's close to the ending (maybe) but this isn't the end lmao i have the real ending planned already REMEVBER READ THE TAGS BEFORE YOU YELL, I TAG SHIT IF I KNOW I HAVE TOO THATS THE ONLY HINT YALL GET))

fun fact I hate this chapter, but it's ok i plan to do better in chapter 6 my aim is angst and new locations people cry in  
ALSO THE LORE FUCKED ME UP NGL

Cliffhangers are so fun though :) now comment or Sam dies /j

# Memories that dance from my hands.

## Chapter Summary

My dear butterfly, where do you go? My dear son, are you home?

The end seems so close now.

## Chapter Notes

**((TW: Derealization, Gore, Hallucinations? Descriptor of bodies, dead people, body horror in a way, the cat is alive. Talks about death. if i missed anything please let me know!))**

i'm actually sad the story's gonna be ending soon, i got attached lmao. But it's fine cuz then i can work on other projects.

This ones for you classroom sobbers, enjoy. I'm not very proud of this chapter, it stressed me OUT but i needed to finish it smh

Anyway follow my twitter i want 20 followers smh @Idespisemilk\_

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I don't want to die papa, I don't want to go away. I know I haven't been strong since I've been away. I know I haven't been good but I don't wanna go. I don't wanna say goodbye, I wanna live.*

*I wanna live papa. I wan-* A short phrase in a book, cut off with messy scribbles as if the boy who wrote it had rushed away. So close to the first page, so close to the beginning. Yet it felt like an ending, *why couldn't that have been the ending?*

---

Wilbur is seen looking at the newborn, face scrunched up as if he was offended by the sight. Always one for the dramatics and once the baby makes one sound Wilbur opens his mouth as Phil dreads what his son was about to sprout out now.

“He’s ugly.”

*Knew it.* Phil groaned, pulling the young brown-haired boy away with a slight exhausted, “*Wil.*” Yet all he got was his son trying to defend himself, and he can hear his tired wife laughing in the background.

“I’m just sayin’ He looks like a grape dad! You said he was pretty.” His now middle child pouts out crossing his arms, “Not my fault I’m truthful.”

He feels his eye twitch at that, choosing to ignore Wilbur as he looks at the other twin who was actually behaving, Techno. Who was staring at the new-born that laid in it’s little bed. The youngest that had them all on edge for the past few months, His baby.

But Techno wasn’t insulting the baby, he wasn’t whiny or anything like his other kid. No Techno was staring at the baby like he would disappear the second he looked away. Techno was looking in awe, like he couldn’t believe he had a baby brother now.

“*Wil- Hun he’s only a couple hours old, don’t be so harsh!*” He hears his wife scold Wilbur in the background, yet Phil watches for any different kind of reaction from Techno.

The boy looked like he wanted to hold the baby but wasn’t sure if he could, which was fair seeing how small the baby had come out. *Phil could hold him with one hand and it scared him, the twins weren’t that size. Were babies supposed to be that tiny?*

But Techno only turns back to look at him with a questioning gaze, “What’s name did you decide?” and Phil hears his wife and other son stop talking at the question. One that had been on everyone's mind since they discovered the gender, one that had his sons fighting over every time the topic came up.

“*Theseus is a good name! Your names always suck.*” Techno said, stomping his foot as he glared at his brother.

*“I think Alex is a good name! You only wanna pick the stupid book ones.” Wilbur shot back before he stomped out their shared room.*

Theseus, *Which his wife wasn't all for*, had been written down along with Alex. A book of names had been bought, each not fitting the baby. None gave them that bright spark that was given when they named the twins. None spoke to Phil and none made his Wife smile. None of them made his sons happy, it was an on-going thing.

Until Phil saw the name that put that spark into him, the second he saw the baby he knew that his name would've been that and when he told his wife she actually smiled at it. They decided to tell the boys when the baby had been born, just to tease them a tad bit.

Phil smiles looking down at the small sleeping baby knowing how much the boy would affect them and whispers, “Tommy, doesn't he seem like a Tommy to you?”

Little tufts of blonde hair, the little nose he knew came from his wife. The tiny hands that Phil could cover easily, his baby and his youngest Tommy. Who would have two big brothers to keep him safe and Parents who would love him forever and ever.

Tommy who changed their lives nine months ago, who still managed to do that now. Maybe it was the fact that he was the kid's dad, all parents saw their kid as the most beautiful baby on earth after all. All of his sons were cute when they were born.

Maybe it was how small Tommy was, maybe it was how Phil felt the boy would depend on them forever. But with all his kid's Phil had never once felt that much of an urge to protect, as if the slightest accident would hurt the baby.

“When's he gonna come home?” Wilbur asked popping up beside Phil, “Cause I wanna show him his new room-”

His wife laughs again, “Wil, he won't even realize what you'll show him, besides he won't be staying there for a while.” And Wilbur groans again.

But Phil ruffles his sons hair, pulling both Wil and Techno into his sides, “He gets to come home tomorrow if everything goes well, and then we can talk about showing him around yeah?” He teased yet it only proved fatal as both his boys went into questioning him.

But Tommy slept peacefully as they all started talking about the things they'd get to do with him once he got older, he slept soundly in a room of people who would protect him forever.

Phil rubs a finger across the old photo, the first one they had taken together in the hospital with his wife holding the grumpy baby and his sons smiling on both her sides with Phil leaning behind her. He felt his eye's start to tear as his vision blurred staring at the picture, one he'd give everything for to go back to.

He sets it back in the box and moves out his room, preparing for another day of handling the community and waiting for the gates to open. And the photo lays basked in the dark of a day that will never happen again.

---

Oddly enough Phil feels normal currently, the type of normal he used to feel when he stepped out onto his blue faded porch in the early mornings and waved hello to his neighbors or laughed at his sons who were out in the front yard playing. The type of normal where the only concern you would get is if you needed to get more milk or not, or the type of normal where Phil would wince when Tommy came bounding up the stairs covered in mud.

It's a delicacy to say he felt that type of normal with how the world was now, and he takes it in with open arms knowing it wouldn't come everyday.

Watching Tubbo and Ranboo chase around a butterfly was relaxing enough for him, Techno and Wil sitting down in the grass a few steps away finally having a chat that wasn't them fighting was great. Phil actually felt at peace for once, just seeing everyone move about like everything was fine and there wasn't a disaster outside.

There's no gut-wrenching pain curling inside of him, no feelings of guilt or regret residing in him like there had been for the past few days and it's slightly concerning.

It's just strange to go from being paranoid over the slightest things to suddenly feeling like you could breathe again. Since the start of this Phil didn't have a single day where he wasn't worried or fearing the worst. But now suddenly it seemed whoever was out there graced him with a brief relaxing period.

Which sad for them, only pushed him to be slightly more vigilant. Waiting for the moment everything went wrong, waiting for the disaster that was meant to happen. For his sons to scream in fear or for the children to his away as the adults fight the danger.

He waits for something to happen while he sits there and watches them. He waits as his mind wanders into endless memories, the noises becoming a peaceful background sound for him.

*Wilbur raises a baby Tommy who looks pissed as the older proclaims him king with Techno placing the fake crown on the baby's head.*

*"King Thomas of House Craft!" Wilbur proclaims setting the baby back down on his throne, which was really his high-chair. "What is your first degree?"*

*Phil watches from the kitchen as his twins lean in to listen to whatever the baby had to say, he has to hold in a snort when Tommy flings the crown at Wilbur's nose in return.*

He wonders if they'd play pretend like that again, knowing his sons were old enough that things like that didn't happen as much. But maybe Tommy could persuade them into doing it one more time.

He sends a smile at his twins who don't even see it, how grown they've gotten. How taller they are now, it's weird. Phil always felt they'd stay small, where he could lift them up without an issue.

*It's late at night after they got back from the hospital. His mom was sent home after he asked her to take care of Tommy for the day. His son's came with him, they got to say goodbye to her before they whisked away her body.*

*Tommy was so loud that entire night, he kept crying and crying like his life was fading and Phil could do nothing but comfort him. Rocking him, patting his back, singing songs she sang that had him choking up.*

*He holds Tommy like it's the last time he will, finally when the boy sleeps and Phil can put him down his other son's move into the room. He already knew he wouldn't sleep that night, knew the boy's would have trouble as well.*

*But when both eight year old's hold their arms up with red faces like they just got done crying again, he ignores the ache in his own arms and holds them close like he did with Tommy. A family of four inside a nursery as three of them try to stay quiet yet bask in the comfort they can get, one sleeping on as the danger stays away from his little brain.*

*Phil holds them that entire night.*

And that's when he sees Puffy walking towards his home with a look that never meant anything good.

"Tubbo, Ranboo can you both go inside for a bit?" Phil calls out turning away for a second to address the two who immediately whine yet still race inside his home as his son's follow after only stopping on the porch with him.

Techno notices Puffy second, "What's going on?" He asks his dad yet receives no answer as Phil silently walks off the porch telling them to stay put. The closer he gets the more he realizes how upset Puffy had looked.

He stops six feet away from her as the wind blows softly and she stops with.



"Puffy?" He questions once.

And she replies with, "Phil.."

The world grows quiet as Phil realizes this is what he suspected. The bad news, the disaster waiting to happen.

"The last searchers came back today." She starts out and if it wasn't for how sad she looked Phil would've been gunning it for the gates just by those words. Because he knew, he knew what he was going to hear.

"They...they didn't find Tommy." She sighs, "And we lost two of them in the process. Apparently a hoard came and surprised them."

*Ignore the first part, ignore the first part* his brain screeches as he nods, taking one look back towards his kids, "Who did we lose?" Is the only thing he asks.

"Ryan and unfortunately Sam." She replied back as Phil winces knowing that their doctor wasn't going to take that lightly.

"Have you told Ponk yet?"

She nods slowly, "First thing I did after I was told the news, Ponk..they didn't take it well. They want to uhm, they want to go and look for his body." *To bury is left unsaid.*

Phil owes a lot to Ponk, not only had they been constantly helping out with the sick and injured, they also treated his kids after the fight. He owes so much to Sam for volunteering to even look for his son when the man never had too.

So the decision is already made, especially if he was going to leave out the gates anyway like they planned.

He puts on a grim look, "I want the two that's left to come to me, when I leave they'll show us the way to the town they left and we'll try to retrieve a body." He explains as he moves closer to Puffy, "Sam deserves a true funeral for everything he's done."

And Puffy nods determined as she full-heartedly agrees, "I know you had hope that this last one would be...the *one* and I'm sorry it wasn't. But you're a good man for this, Ponk's grateful."

The older man can only nod as he moves away quickly, knowing he'd have to explain to his sons. "Get a car ready for us, I told you I'd leave the second they'd come back if Tommy wasn't with them and I meant it." As he storms off, not allowing her to say anything else.

Wilbur and Techno only wait on the porch as Phil steps back on, putting a hand on both their shoulders as he starts with the bad news.

But Techno interrupts him first, "They didn't find him. Did they?" His oldest questions knowing what Phil was already told.

He nods once as his son's faces shine with hurt.

"We're still going to look, right dad?" Wilbur asks next, near frantic as if he was worried Phil would've called it then and there.

But Phil would never. He would and will never call off the search for Tommy, not until his dying breath. *Not until he finds something, just something he begs.*

"Go pack some things, we leave today." He orders them before moving towards the door, allowing the two kids to barrel out with shouted goodbyes as the three rush inside to prepare.

He tries to have hope that they bring back only one body.

---

Nervous, that's what Techno notes of the two people that came back without the rest of their team. Shaking like they were being led to their deaths, maybe they were. No one knew if the hoard had passed yet and for all they knew this could be the last day they breathed. But he and his family were determined, they'd find Sam's body, bring it back and then they'd go find Tommy.

"Do you remember where you saw him last?" Phil questions breaking the silence from the car, Wilbur looked up once in interest but it didn't last long, Techno just stared at the two. They'd been driving for some time, no one spoke other than the occasional games Techno and Wilbur played along the way, sometimes Phil joined in.

The girl, Techno thinks her name was Jenny, flinches looking over at her partner before shaking her head, "Uhm- We separated. I know we went into a store but I haven't a clue where Sam went." She answers timidly and Techno notes the frantic looks she keeps giving the other.

One shared look between him and Wilbur gave him enough information they needed, *Suspicious*. The two were suspicious, that wasn't a good sign to begin with and Techno knew what they used to be loyal to. The points just lowered themselves, he already knew this day would possibly end with them trying something.

Bad luck goes to them however, all three of them show no remorse towards murdering another anymore. It's just the way of life, a body that's forgotten in the dirt and a soul that has no meaning. They could've left the community after Phil's whole attack, they chose to stay and they knew one foot out of line would end with them thrown to the wolves.

Phil knocks both Wilbur and Techno back into space by humming. It's low and threatening, Techno knew that specific hum because when they got in trouble Phil made the same sound. To others it just seemed deep, a little harmless hum, for Wilbur and Techno it meant nothing good.

His dad suspected something was up too, “So we search the area you last saw him, we can look in the building you guys went into. He might’ve seen you guys go in, never know.” His dad mutters as the car takes a turn, the two in the back pale further.

“I don’t think - Sam wouldn’t have. We would’ve seen him!” Jenny laughs out nervously, shifting closer to the other guy in the car as two sets of eyes land on just her, “I mean c’mon, who’d walk in a building and not call out for the others? We heard nothing, saw nothing, he didn’t go in.”

She tries to save herself but the hole digs itself and Phil grins showing a full set of teeth in the rear-view mirror. “There was a huge hoard right? You never know what could happen, the panic sets in and fear overrides the brain.”

Another turn, the car goes silent as everyone looks at Phil who’s eyes drift back to the road ahead. “You could leave behind something without realizing it, focus is on one thing not another. It happens by accident most times.” His dad continues as the two other’s bristle with hate at the accusing tone.

The guy beside Jenny finally spoke up, glaring at Phil with the same hatred he had before. “We don’t leave behind people, don’t think I don’t know the games you play. You think I’d go back to that shitshow if I left behind a loyal member of your group? Ya think I’m suicidal?” He spits, literally the guy spits and Techno felt it. So much for being the closest one, he sees Wilbur laugh at his grossed out face.

Phil being the savior for this man, because yes Techno was once inch away from starting a brawl in the car, laughs out loud. It’s not a sweet one either, not one Techno would’ve run to like he had many laughs before, “I think, someone needs to not freak out so much. I don’t think you’re stupid enough to come running back to us, not if you did something you knew was wrong.” Phil explains calmly, Techno sees a sign coming up meaning they were finally getting closer.

The guy grunts, shifting further into his seat as relaxation also hits him and the girl. They knew how close they were to the town, how close they were to the real truth coming out. Techno wondered when they’d crack, if they would really. Maybe they were stubborn enough to believe his family fell for the lies they’ve sung. Maybe they hoped whatever the left behind

was gone, evidence washed away. *Maybe they hoped whatever did happen to Sam wasn't enough to get them killed.*

And Jenny grins at Phil, her posture shifting into a strained one as she leveled her emotions. They pass the sign and Jenny doesn't even spare it a glance, gone was the timid nervous lady who Techno was pretty sure would crack first. Replaced with someone who had enough spite and guts to believe they'd win this, when Wilbur gasps he's shown why the girl was determined.

Bodies laid around them, dead and unmoving. The monsters were dead, bones broken and some parts destroyed like someone came barreling through in a hurry. Like someone wanted to survive, Techno could tell they'd been run over. *But there were so many, his brain supplied, it could've been the two when they escaped.*

*It could've just been a flake.*

"Techno, Wil." Phil addressed them, slowing the car at certain spots, "When we get out you both stick by my side, no messing about or running off got it?" He orders sternly, not allowing them to make any complaints or whines.

Wilbur nods slowly, "Yeah- got it."

And Techno just hums, his hand finding his brothers who squeezes in reassurance. The air felt wrong, just - it made him sick for some reason. The same drop his stomach gave when Tommy never walked out a car happened again, the other two had grown quiet and Phil was focused on the road heavily. Wilbur was his only source of comfort and even then he could see his brother just as nauseous as he was over it.

The car keeps moving, Techno finds himself wishing it'd stop before they enter the dark and abandoned town.

---

*He's been walking forever. An endless path that never changed, as his forever sanctuary seemed to never get close. At some point Techno is forced to watch as blood stains his hands even as nothing comes to cause them. At some point, he loses his shoes as rocks and glass stab into his skin when he walks.*

*"You'd protect me forever right?" Tommy's ghost whispers to him, his hand reaches out and suddenly he's back at the start of the path.*

*Techno walks again, he would walk forever until he was finally allowed to reach his baby brother.*

*"Forever." He promises back, each time, each loop. He promises and Tommy keeps asking.*

*He reaches the end of the path, he loses count on how many loops it's been. How many times he saw his little brother right there only to be forced thousands of hours away again, but here he was. Finally allowed at the end, his feet ache and his stomach hurts.*

*Tommy isn't at the end, Techno falls to the ground as he laughs. Tears flowing down his eyes, washing away grime and blood, but Tommy isn't there.*

*"So why'd you lie?"*

*He had never been at the end to begin with. And Techno wakes up.*

---

The town is odd for them, weirdly enough it's not the bodies or how gross the air was. It wasn't how abandoned it was, how broken it was. It was how new it had been for them, they hadn't been out the gates since the start of this whole thing. Locked away like little pets who never knew what grass was, they only saw the real start of the end. Now for the first time they got to truly see the aftermath.

It's weird.

He shifts closer to Wilbur, almost knocking them both over but neither speaks on it. Phil stands behind them, looking out in shock or awe, Techno doesn't know. "This - this is literally a horror movie setting.." Wilbur mutters out, flinching when something in the town falls.

"Maybe we're in a movie, a really fucked up one.." Techno responds back, Phil lightly smacks both their heads as a warning to ease up. "Just saying! Tough crowd-"

Phil doesn't respond back to him, instead turning to the other two adults with a questioning glance. "Well - where was the last place you saw Sam?"

Jenny shrugs, "I told you- we don't fully know. There was a scream, Sam took off towards it and left us behind." She explains, aiming a look at the guy who nods along.

*Liars*, Wilbur signs to him where they can't see.

His dad sighs, rubbing the space between his eyebrows before he puts on that fake cheery dad smile. "So you two can search around here, me and my son's can search the other parts." He declares, placing a comforting hand on both their shoulders. "I hope we can come back to each other, just know."

Gone is the smile, there on his dad's face was a dark glare as he stared down the two. "Going back to the community is a death wish, what would they think? You came back the first time with two losses, what happens when it becomes three more? Let's not find out, yeah?" Phil threatened, Techno was slightly proud. But the two nod fast, fixing up their weapons before they leave without even saying goodbye. It was nice to know he wasn't the only one suspicious about their story.

"What if they steal the car?" Wilbur asks once they start walking as well, dodging a few sketchy spots in the ground, "We'd have no way back, I'm not walking either."

With a teasing push from Techno, Phil responds back with a nicer laugh. “I know you two got taught how to hot-wire shit, don’t think i haven’t seen you both with Dream in a car. Or Puffy for example, she sees all.”

“That’s horrifying dad.”

“It’s the truth, she knows when you kids do something you shouldn’t and in return I know.” Phil responds back, kicking a can out his way as they enter the first store. Some gift shop Techno assumes, “Like the fact Wilbur tried to convince Niki to show him out past the gates.”

Wilbur straightens his back, slowly looking at his dad with a false grin as the man looks at him sternly. “I- well uhm... I’m gonna go check the back- have fun!” His brother shouts, running off past the **EMPLOYEES ONLY** sign leaving him with Phil who snorts, Techno following along.

They don’t say anything for a moment after that, Phil looking in the front while Techno looks at the back. Rummaging around old party favors, stuffing a few popping toys in his bag. He almost whines when he finds old snacks, all past savings since some were open and some were expired. What he wouldn’t do for a bag of chips again, back when there were professionals who made it and shipped them out.

He distantly wished he would be alive when they got the world working right again, it’s a far fetched and a stupid thing to wish but he still wished for it. Hell if someone fixed this mess, he’d take Tommy and Wil both out to go crazy with buying snacks.

*He promised Tommy on his birthday he’d let him go crazy in the candy store, didn’t he?*

Wilbur ends up busting out the back rooms holding a bat he knew the boy didn’t have before. Telling them both Sam wasn’t back there, obviously, after that they moved onto the other stores. They entire grocery stores, toy stores, clothing stores that Phil forces them to stay in so they could all get new clothes. Wilbur even got Tommy a cute little bear jacket, refusing to put it away when Techno told him the little boy would hate it.



*“He loves bears. Thank you very much, he’s gonna wear the jacket.” Wilbur sticks his nose up, pushing past his brother who just groans in annoyance.*

He ends up getting a new jacket, soft to the touch and a light enough purple that didn’t have his eyes burning. Sure Phil makes him get more clothes, but he was able to pick what he liked. The only reason they left was because of the reminder, this wasn't a normal shopping trip. It was a mission, they couldn’t do things like this anymore.

Somehow the reminder doesn’t make him feel good.

Restaurants come and go, no food worth snatching and he definitely wasn’t gonna fight with some dumpster rat over a moldy sandwich on the ground. He would never be that desperate for food, ever. *It does remind him of when Wilbur and him were both seven, some kid dared Wil to eat a sandwich that hadn’t been touched in months, of course his brother did. He was dared five bucks, he was gonna do it. Wilbur ended up in the hospital after because he got ill, Phil banned food dares after that.*

*Tommy didn’t get that memo, at six years old he did something like that and ended up in the hospital too. Though the winning fact was instead of five bucks he was dared ten, somehow he didn’t regret it even when he puked his guts out.*

They find one thing that gives them a lead, one of Sam’s guns left out in the street, bodies piled all around with bullet wounds on them. The gun was still useful, just out of bullets, it didn’t explain why it had just been left out in the open. The only thing that told them nothing bad had to have happened was the fact they saw nothing else of the man, Phil assumes it was dropped to lose weight.

And of course even after Phil’s warnings, Wilbur breaks them all with a gasp forcing them to look in worry. Only for Techno to groan when he catches sight of what his brother saw, some music shop across the street. They were forced to leave behind a lot of Wil’s musical items, something that hurt his brother deeply.

“Wil-” Phil starts with a warning tone, already knowing where this was leading. “Wil we can check it out later- WIL!” The older blonde shouts not a minute later as Wilbur rushes towards the store in a trance, heart racing at the second.

They both share a look before running after the boy, “Fucks sake- he was the one we should’ve leashed up!” Techno groans out, jumping over the curb as he watches his brother crawl through the broken glass doors. Phil sighs in response, following along as they reach the store.

He wonders why his heart screams he turn back.

---

Here's the thing about Wilbur.

He’s a sucker for plays, he loves music, he loves them combined. It was all because of his mother, back when she was alive she used to show him tapes of her plays. She used to bring him to plays too, hell at night she’d sing for him so he could sleep. When they worked together, some tunes were hummed.

Music was his mother, music was his little passion she passed down on him. When she died, for a moment he lost his song. It hurt to listen to her tapes, to sing without her following along. At first he was prepared to give up the second thing he loved that was hers, and then Tommy, little baby Tommy, demanded he sing him a lullaby.

Tommy brought back his song and Wilbur found his spark again. Music becomes his life again, he shows Tommy his mothers tapes and invites his family to ever play he’s in. He buys all kinds of music, learns different instruments, he plays songs he liked and makes them into something else.

At fourteen he writes his first song and gets to play it during his school’s show, Tommy cheers from his dad's lap after the last chord is played and Wilbur knew this was what he wanted to do in life. He wanted to write songs, sing in front of crowds who cheered, he wanted to sing for his brother.

At seventeen, the world ruins it for him again. You have to pick between staying with the items you loved most versus living with your family who aren’t some little thing you’d find again. He has to leave behind his mother’s tapes, his first guitar and all his records. Wilbur has to leave a part of him in that house that he’s sure he’d never see again.

Wilbur leaves behind something he loved.

And in this new world you can't just get these things again really, you can't carry it with you. All he has left is his mouth and little makeshift instruments, he has his old music safely put in the box under his new bed but what's the point of bringing them out when you can't make it sound real anymore?

So seeing this store right there in his reach brings something out in him, an ache he wanted to fix. It's dumb to rush in, he knew this, but he's still human. He lived in the old world sometimes, he forgets he can't do these things anymore.

Yet his eyes water when he sees some instruments left safely on the walls. Wil felt at home, even when Phil came in shortly after him shaking him as he scolded his son with Techno complaining.

"It's here.." He whispers regardless of how angry they both were, "Look- dad look it's here!"

"Wilbur - this wasn't worth you making me have a heart attack!" His dad scolds back, pulling at his arms only to be shoved softly away as the brunette walks to the counter. "Wilbur, stop-"

He doesn't stop, not when he's so close to a guitar, "Just look! I can- I can bring this back!" He shouts walking faster, Techno oddly quiet even as Phil follows him with quick steps.

Here's another thing.

Wilbur is guilty, he is the living image of guilt. He loved his mom, he loved his music. He loves Techno and Phil, but he loved Tommy most. The boy reminded him of his mother, he brought a piece of her with him. And Wilbur - Wilbur lost that. He let it go, even when everyone still tells him not to place the blame on his skin he will. He'd do it forever, he's killed a man before and felt nothing. But having a hand in his brother's disappearance, being the main cause to Tommy's torture?

That's where the guilt builds.

Tommy is Wilbur's gift, he's the tune that helps him fix the little mistakes in the paper. No matter how much he loved these things, Tommy would've come first. So when he takes another step only to pause when he sees something that tugs at his heart, he's soon to realize just how ironic this was. There was an open area, one that led to stairs that he knew must've led upstairs to a new area. There were windows in the front, it could've been another part of the store or some living area.

However on the stairs, Techno noticed it too. It's why he went silent, laid a dirty shirt that tugs at his memory. Phil still shouts at him even when he changes directions over to the stairs, step by step. Dodging a limb that had no owner, jumping over a dead body he could care less about. The shirt was blue, he could tell even with the dirt on it, it was bloody in some spots.

There's a goose holding a knife stitched on the front and Wilbur feels his stomach drop to the floor as his feet trip to get it, he knows this shirt. He had a bigger one at the house. So did Phil, so did Techno. They had this hand-made by a friend, a Christmas gift for all of them.

It's tiny. *It's Tommy's.*

"Dad-" He hears Techno stutter out as Wil bends to lift it, "Dad look-"

His heart beats, he checks the tag. **TOMMY'S** is written in faded black ink on it, messy as a child's handwriting. Messy writing that belonged to his baby brother. "What- Techno, Wil what's-" Phil starts up stressed, following his son's only to pause in the same shock when the shirt enters his sight as well.

"That's.. That's Tommy's." Techno gasps, reaching for the shirt as if it was a gift of gold. Maybe it was, but Wilbur looks up the stairs and he sees blood everywhere. "He was here! Dad, dad Tommy!" Techno spins to his dad in growing excitement, Phil following along as neither seem to catch on to the blood Wilbur sees. How the air reeked of dead, how silent it was regardless of the noises they made.

Only Wilbur catches on to how wrong it felt, he holds the shirt close when he takes off up the stairs ignoring the shouts of surprise. Step after step, beat after beat, Wilbur doesn't falter. The other two shout for him to stop, to wait for them, but he keeps on.

Finally he reaches the end, the blood trails as millions of footprints lead to one place. There's a door, caved in and scratched to hell with bloody trails and left behind skin. His brain screams to turn, Phil pauses behind him and whispers, "Wil, don't we don't know what's in here!"

He takes a step.

"Wilbur- I mean it, young man come here." Phil demands, holding a hand out so Techno can't get past him.

He reaches towards the door, shirt slipping out his hands as he just imagines it.

"Wil listen to Dad man! You'll get hurt!" Techno pleads, Wilbur smiles as he hears Tommy, Tommy, *Tommy*.

*He's there waiting for Wil to open the door, to hug him tight as he shouts, "You found me! You found me, you saved me Wilby!" And Wilbur can hold him back, he can hold something warm and alive.*

*"I found you.." He'd whisper into soft curls, "I found you Tom's!"*

The door creaks when he pushes it slowly, his smile grows as this fake Tommy cheers. He'd be forgiven, he could apologize to the one person he truly hurt. They'd stop blaming him, they'd stop hating him. Phil would be happy with him, Techno would trust him. They'd forgive him because *he* found Tommy. A laugh slips out at the thought, if he never ran in here would they have really found the shirt? Would they have skipped past and never found Tommy?

“William I swear to god if you don’t get your ass behind me right now-” Phil scolds behind him, finger tips grazing on his shirt to pull him back and yet he still ignores his dad as the door is fully pushed open with some trouble. Something had been blocking the door, he had to push it open.

Tommy must’ve done it for safety.

A decomposed hand falls in front of him, a thud rings out and everyone pauses. Phil curses grabbing at him harsher but Wilbur actually turns around to shove his dad away with a feral growl, *he wouldn’t ruin this for him. Not this, anything but this.*

“Fuck off, he’s in here dad-” He says frantically, stepping inside even as a pit grows inside him. Even when he sees bodies laid across the room, Tommy was in here.

*“You found me..” Tommy whispers cuddling into his brother's arms, fingers digging harshly into his sleeves and Wilbur laughs wetly.*

*Blonde hair turns dirty, clean skin turns dirty and ripped up as blood pours out. Wilbur keeps holding Tommy with a smile, he wouldn’t let go again.*

*“I did, I did..” He finalizes as teeth break into his skin, staring at dull baby blue eyes as Tommy growls, eating him alive.*

*“I found you.”*

---

Wilbur disappears from his sight, Phil curses loudly before he shifts to send a sterner look at his other son who wilted. “Stay here until I give the all clear, do not come in Techno.” He demands not waiting for an answer as he shifts into the room, paling at the bodies that catch his sight as well, though he doesn’t see Wilbur yet.

Though soon Phil hears Wilbur gasp first before he officially steps into the room, he hears the heart-broken sound that the boy let out next as feet fell to a stop. And it concerns him at first, maybe there was a sight he didn't want to see in there. Maybe something got Wil, maybe it was-

He stops the thoughts as quickly as they come.

Yet with his gun drawn Phil steps in and sees the lanky form of his son holding something small with shaking hands. It's when Phil looks at what Wilbur was holding when he realized what they were looking at. Why his son let out those sounds to begin with, why Wilbur was acting off.

Hands being stained with blood that wasn't that old, yet not that fresh either. Holding a bloody cow plush he knew far too well, Wilbur was holding *Henry* in his hands and at first Phil felt hope spark in his chest.

At first when Wilbur found Tommy's shirt he had felt lighter, he felt that innocent hope sparked again. He thought his son was closer than he had known, then he see's Henry and it grows. Until he noticed the trail of blood that was far too fresh to be a monster's, until his eyes followed it to a corner where bags laid and blood scattered around as if someone messed with a red paint bucket. A scene straight out of a crime story, something that mixes in the worst things inside your brain.

He sees the bag Tommy had from the beginning, he sees a new bag laying sideways with it's contaminants out as if someone rushed through it in a frenzy. He sees the blood, *the blood*.

*The blood that someone left behind.*

And he sees a notebook beside it all, a small messy handprint left on its cover. Phil knew what this was, he knew what he was looking at. Phil knew this could happen, the bodies gave it away and the half broken door did too. The bodies inside told a story, the blood on the walls with left behind loved things screamed it.

Phil knew.

"Dad..?"

He knew this was a huge possibility.

He doesn't notice when the gun slipped out his hands as he stares down the wreckage, he never realizes when he starts to cry or shake. But he knows when he feels his heart break into a thousand shards as his brain connects it all.

Tommy had been so close to them, so so close that Phil had felt so fucking proud of him. His baby had made it farther than anyone else would have in this world, no weapons or strength to save him yet somehow Tommy made it.

Somehow that bright little boy got so close even when they started to give up, Tommy who would've cried over a frog being chased off. His fucking kid, his pride and joy that barely got to exist in a true world.

The kid he loved.

The kid he **failed** .

Tommy was so close and yet in the end? Tommy was further away where even Phil couldn't reach, that blonde little boy he held wasn't in an arm's reach anymore. Tommy wasn't coming home, Phil knew this. He knew no one like Tommy could survive in the new world and yet he forced himself to hope, to believe Tommy was cut out for it.

*He wonders who found the remains first, who killed the zombies. He wonders which ate his boy's body, which held his arms and which had his heart inside them. He wonders if they'd feel him stab them open even when they were dead on the ground forever.*



His son had died alone and scared, injured with no one to save him and no one to hold his hand. His son died without them and it tears him apart. Techno walks in when he hears the cries, his son breaks at the sight too as he holds the door to keep himself up.

Wilbur picks up the notebook with shaking hands and turns to Phil with wide eyes, pleading. Begging him to lie, to give some hopeful truth that led them down that believer path.

He shakes his head, he can't bring himself to lie anymore and Wilbur steps in front of him shaking, his lips quivering even as Phil chokes on his own sobs. Techno somehow ends up behind him, whispering something quickly under his breath.

They were so *young* .

Techno stepped in front of him with tears rushing down as his son connected the dots with him and the second Wilbur slams his head into Phil's chest with a loud screeching wail, Phil falls to the ground with his son's holding him so tight in fear of never being able to hold them again. Letting them go seemed like a trap, like he'd blink and he'd have lost them all too.

They were so fucking young, Tommy was so little. And they were too late, they didn't save him. *What were his last thoughts, what did he do, how did he make it this far? Was he scared or did he resent them. Did he get to a better place, was he happier?* His son's wail as tears and snot wipe all over his clothes, they plead and they beg. Phil cannot lie, he can't spin this into something good.

The notebook falls to their side, the little handprint and Tommy's handwriting catches his eye twisting his heart all around.

And Phil cries as loud as he had when his wife died.

---

*"Hey little man, shouldn't you be sleeping?" Phil croaks out in the dead of night as little hands pull on his bed sheets, the moon shining in his room even when he hears his baby*

*whine in anger.*

*“UP!” Tommy squeaks as he tries to climb again, Phil lets out a sigh as he slowly lifts Tommy into his bed with a soft grin. It was late and the house was quiet, hell he doesn't even know how the kid got out of his room to begin with.*

*“Are you getting ready to be an escape artist kid? Is this gonna be our nights now?” Phil teases as Tommy plops onto his stomach giggling, placing Henry down on his chest as well. “Little babies should be sleeping in their beds, not bothering their Papa’s with goofy acts!”*

*But Tommy squeals, kicking his little feet, not understanding anything Phil said as he shouts, “PAPA! Wake wake!”*

*“Yes Papa is awake, good eyes you got on you.” He yawned, shifting Tommy so the boy was laid on his chest with a hand placed on his back to make sure he didn’t fall. “However it’s bedtime for rug-rats, you are not the expectation of staying up late Tom’s.”*

*“Wake.” Tommy states fact with a nod as Phil snorts, he hears little feet stomping outside telling him he was about to have more company and in a minute he was right. His door opens as two boys peek in, giggling as Tommy turns curiously.*

*“You woke up you’re brother’s didn’t you?” Phil questions as the older two rush in, jumping on Phil’s bed as Tommy squeals louder.*

*“He demanded it dad!” Wilbur sighed dramatically, the little shit getting all comfortable on the other side of the bed with Techno following after, scooting close to his brother as they grinned at Phil.*

*“I’m pretty sure all three of you have your own beds, why aren’t we sleeping in those hm?”*

*Techno cheekily pokes him, “Tommy wanted to sleep here, we listen to the king.” He says with a huff, smiling as Tommy’s little hands reach for his own.*

*“Sleep!” The baby suddenly demands, scooting off his dad’s chest between Phil and Techno with a happy squeak as Phil helped tuck him in. “Sleep sleep sleep!”*

*“Yeah Dad, sleep!” His twins giggle laying down with fake snores as Tommy copies them to his best abilities, Phil just rolls his eyes and lays back down. Letting one arm lay on top of all three of them with one last snort.*

*“Just for tonight okay kids?” He demands, getting fake snores and a grumpy baby noise in the process, “I mean it, this isn’t a nightly thing.”*

*“SLEEP!” Tommy shouts patting Phil’s cheek with a stern glare, the man gives up with a sigh.*

*“Fine- Sleeping now, I love you three!” He sings kissing each of their cheeks making them laugh before he too copies the fake snores.*

*The twins say they love him too, he thinks Tommy said something like it and soon the family of four slept into the night in the comfort of each other.*

And now a family of three, just three, hold each other as they wail. No little hands demanding they do something, no more fourth.

It’s just Phil, Techno, and Wilbur. There’s not a Tommy to hold anymore, all that's left is memories they can never remake.

There’s nothing left and Phil gives up.

---

*That family of three however don't catch sight of an open window, they don't catch sight of a bag of weapons left behind on the fire escape.*

*Somewhere Phil's family breaks as a piece of them rots.*

*Somewhere a gate opens, somewhere a Dead man rushes out of that old breaking car he stole as he screams for help holding another limp in his arms.*

*Somewhere a father holds his only sons left as they put a child's bags in the back of a trunk, somewhere a brother holds a notebook as tight as he could in fear of losing his brother's last memories.*

*And somewhere Tommy's heart beats slowly.*

## Chapter End Notes

All of you sobbing over the last chapter: bAD ENDING?? HES DEAD??

Me knowing I'm causing trust issues: ahhaa gender reveal! It's a happy ending!!

Told ya'll to pay attention to the tags smhhh

((The ones convinced there wasn't gonna be a happy ending crying because of last chapter are gonna have a field day now. ALSO I'M SORRY FOR THE DELAY, I REWROTE SO MANY SCENES IN THIS AND JUST HATED EVERY SINGLE ONE. And i got distracted with other stories so..haha!!!))

Comment or we never see the cat again. /j

p.s check the tags ;)

# At an arms distance, you cry before me

## Chapter Summary

This is it, isn't it?

## Chapter Notes

**((TW: Gorey topics, murder, guns, blood, derealization, medical stuff, talks about wounds, mentioned about someone losing an arm a lot, implied arm loss, shouting.))**

I AM SO SORRY ABOUT THE WAIT, I ended up getting my first ever job and I work full-time now so the time I had with writing grew little. I was either too tired to write or too busy to write, but it's finally here and I'm so sad- This was such a fun story to work on :')

Enjoy!

Also follow my twitter I want clout: @Idespisemilk\_

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

***I'm sorry.***

The car's silent, far too silent. Phil sits as still as stone as he drives, Techno hasn't moved since he sat down. The other two residents in the car look pale and uncomfortable, shifting every now and then.

***I'm sorry.***

The only sound they hear is the sound of pages moving, little thumps of water falling onto the pages. Wilbur has said nothing, he hasn't smiled or laughed. He just reads, refusing to let anyone see just as he refuses to let go of the blood covered stuffed animal in his lap.

***I'm sorry.***

There's bumps in the road, Phil grits his teeth as his eyes blurry. Hand tightening around the wheel, there's so much raging in his brain. *Failure, failure. How can you call yourself a father if you can't protect them? One dead son could make two more, did he die mad? Did he die afraid? How did he die- how could he have slipped away.* The only reason Phil reminds himself he's driving is when Techno's hair jumps from a big bump. The only reason Phil hadn't just let go of the wheel was because he still had two kids who needed him.

***I'm sorry.***

Tommy needed him too, look where that got him. In some sad twisted way, Phil had been slightly thankful there was nothing left of Tommy. If this was how they reacted to just knowing, how would they have reacted if they saw Tommy dead? *They'd scream, reach for the body with no beating heart and they'd wail. They'd have died alongside the body, the closest they'd ever be again.* There's another movement of the page, Wilbur had been reading it since they started to drive. *What was in it? What did Tommy write in there?*

***I'm sorry.***

And then, a small tiny laugh. Painful and near forceful, but Wilbur laughs. It has Techno flinching and Phil stiffening. "He- he wanted to steal a deer." Wilbur laughs out, his hair hiding his face as his shoulders shake, "He just, he was so childish. Everything- it was some silly game for him." There's a small noise as Wilbur's hands tighten more into the book as the smile grows dim. "It's so fucked, he was so sure we'd find him. That he'd have stories to share."

"Wil." Phil sighs out, a plea to stop but Wilbur doesn't.

"You wanna know what's more fucked?" He laughs again, manic and deranged as the other two in the back curl away. "That because he'd been so sure, he survived. He's gone through so much- saw people die. And you know- here let me tell you this part. He made a grave for someone he didn't know. " Another shift of the pages, Wilbur's finger smacking against a word. "He cursed, he existed. He made shit, survived and felt bad for things he did. Like

cursing, he *wanted* you to tell him off. Breaking into homes, felt bad about Stealing shit, felt bad about *Living*, he felt bad about it.”

“*Wilbur.*”

“He did so much while we sat and waited for *him* to come to us. The ironic bit is when we do- when we finally get up and go towards him.” Wilbur spits, setting the bloody book aside as he curls into himself, “He’s dead and gone, died thinking we’d never find him. Survived for nothing, Tommy was always meant to just fucking die.”

In that moment the car jerks to a stop as a foot lands heavily on the brake, jerking everyone forward in shock as Phil breathes heavily.

And Wilbur pales as his dad *sobs*, banging his head onto the wheel as he cries. No one says anything, they just look. They just stare as the man cries into the wheel, gut-wrenching sobs tearing out his throat as he gasps in an attempt for air.

It hurts, Wilbur knows this. He's experienced loss before, as a young boy he thought his mother would stay forever. As a brother he thought Tommy would outlive him, he was older. He was meant to be buried before Tommy, that's how this worked.

Parents shouldn't bury their children, Siblings shouldn't watch their siblings be buried. That's how this was meant to work, that's how life was meant to go for them.

Wilbur wishes it worked out that way, it didn't but gods does he wish it did.

Instead of apologizing though, Wilbur looks at the last pages and mutters, "He's sorry..."

And he knows there's nothing else to do but mourn.

That is until the girl opens her mouth and whispers "God.." As the man beside her glares, yet she still continues.

"We saw him on the run. We- I'm *sorry*. " She cries as her body shakes, looking down as the family stares at her with shock and growing rage.

" *We shot him.* "

In life there's breaking points, Wilbur thinks he just hit that point when she spoke those last words. He thinks of Tommy, afraid and hurt thinking these people would save him. He thinks of Tommy crying alone in that room as bullet wounds ache and burn.

He thinks of Tommy not having a second to think before a gun was pointed at his head in a last minute attempt of pure selfish motives.

Wilbur thinks of Tommy when he silently pulls out his own gun and shoots the man sitting beside the girl, ignoring her loud screeching screams of fear as he stares. Stares at the body, the blood and the guts.

He stares as his family silently moves to take out the man's body, demanding the girl stay put lest she be shot too.

And Wilbur wonders, did Tommy experience that too?

---

It doesn't cross his mind that he just killed another man without a thought. Nor does he think about how emotionless he felt moving the body or wiping the blood, not even glancing at the shaking women watching her partner's body be dragged out.



He doesn't bother to offer her a rag to wipe off the blood coating her body, instead he hopes it stains. *Because she knew, she knew what happened and knew who killed his brother. She knew it all and kept her mouth shut, the guilt ate her alive until she couldn't stand it.*

*She knew and didn't say a word.*

Instead Wilbur pretends nothing happened, he acts sane for the sake of appearances.

"You'll be escorted into a cell the second we get back, if you try to run I'll shoot you dead without blinking." Phil tells her calmly after they sit back into the car, a body left on the road side to rot. She nods, staring out the window at the body.

This is life now, Wilbur and Techno knew that from the first blood they split. They knew it, they've grown used to it. *But Tommy would never have that chance, they took it away.*

She may be living now but between him and the others, once the truth came out it was only a matter of time before she died too. Be it by his hand or another's, no doubt she wouldn't survive the week.

Wil wants to ask, *Are you proud? Happy of what you've done? So many deaths on your hand and for what? Are you okay with the choices you've made?* However instead he stays silent, squeezing Henry as Techno reads Tommy's notebook.

He can't take back what they've done but he can sure as hell get revenge for Tommy, that much he can do.

---

Sam's worried, he's severely fucking worried. The boy was bleeding out when he found him and even with the knowledge Sam had he couldn't just fix the boy with his hands. He could only prolong the unfortunate death that could happen, Everything else was on Ponk's hand.

It hurt though, finding out they thought he was dead and not being able to hug Ponk and have that cheerful reunion as they hoped.

No he couldn't do that because the second the car stopped he grabbed the kid's limp body and screamed for help, ignoring the shocked looks as he ran towards the medical building shouting help.

Because the kid was dying, he knew he was but he was gonna do everything to save the kid. For many reasons, but the main one that motivated him the most?

He's so sure the kid was Tommy, looking near identical to Phil. The same nose as the twins, around the age Tommy was. No doubt in his mind he was sure this was the kid.

And if by some horrible chance it wasn't, that didn't mean he'd let the kid die.

So no he didn't get to hug Ponk, instead having to shove a bloody pale child into the arms of his partner as he tells him, "He's been shot, in the arm and stomach. Lost a shit ton of blood and I'm pretty sure he's- he's sick." Sam gasps out, looking at the boy sadly as Ponk quickly moves to set him down on a bed.

"I think he's the kid we've been looking for." He spits out next, moving as well to help Ponk get ready.

And they nod, "If he is you better start to pray, It's gonna hurt getting the bullet out his stomach. The Arm- he might lose his arm but I'll see what I can do." They sprout out, moving tools and bags around. "He's gonna need blood- Phil kept all three of their documents in his house, go get them, someone's about to have to be willing to give some. Can't wait for Phil to get back."

Sam nods distantly, "What if this isn't Tommy? What then?" He questions only to be stared at by Ponk for a moment.

"It's the kid, I've seen pictures. And if by some odd chance it's a look-a-like well then, we pray." He says pushing the other out, "Now hurry, we can't wait anymore."

Listening, Sam takes off out of the room and building, straight to Phil's home as everyone gawks at the dead man running with his life. A goal in mind, He has no time to even stop for Puffy who looked pale at the sight of him. Reaching for him with shaking hands that he painfully had to dodge, she'd understand later he knew she would.

But Sam refused to have the kid's blood on his hands, refused to let that kid die so easily without living the life he should've been given. Sam refused to give up on him.

He just hoped the kid didn't give up on himself.

---

*They say your life flashes when you die, as fast as you could blink. Memories you forgot, ones you cherished. They came, showed you the life you once held. They made you regret many things, the things you did. Things you didn't do, things you wished you could've done.*

*You see the ones you loved and wish you could've made one more memory. You regret that, not making that last cherish able memory of them that you'd take with you to the grave.*

*You see what you did, that's the truth about life and death. For even in those dying moments, you still live for just a second. You're still a human even when Death takes you into her hold. You remember.*

*Tommy's sitting in the field as it slowly lights up, he remembers his mothers laughter. It's faint, like he barely heard it. Like he wasn't truly there when she laughed, a recording on loop that makes his heart swell.*

*He's never heard her laugh before, he never remembered that video-tape his father played for him all those years ago.*

*And somehow, the field glows.*

---

There's a million things Techno isn't.

He is not a hero, he doesn't save the day like he used to say. He's not the saint others made him out to be, hell he's not a good person. He's nothing, he isn't what he wanted to be.

He is a liar. That he knows

Here's the thing, Techno isn't close to Tommy like Wil is. He loved the kid more than anything, but Wilbur was able to help more. To exist more when Tommy needed a brother, rarely was Techno that brother who taught Tommy the things he craved. He taught Tommy how to fight, how to be brave.

But he also held Tommy back, Wilbur was the brother who comforted Tommy. Techno was the stern one, the one who just couldn't let the kid walk by himself on a sidewalk. He spoiled Tommy just as he kept the kid away from the danger that wasn't truly there.

He was protective, worried. Over-thinking everything, he kept Tommy safe from a distance. Told the kid he was fine when he scraped a knee even when he was the one putting on the Band-Aids. He wasn't Wilbur who said comforting words, who hugged and smiled to make others feel great.

He wasn't...good.

He isn't Wilbur, yet at this current moment he wonders if that's such a bad thing. Watching his brother from the rear mirror, broken and desperate. Away from the reality that crashed down on him, cradling Tommy's stuffed animal like it was his life-line. Wilbur wasn't okay,

he wasn't telling them how everything would be okay. Wasn't telling those cheerful lies to help the mood, no Wilbur was crying.

His brother was hurting badly, Techno knew this much just as he knew there wasn't anyway he could help. Tommy's death had him feeling blank, gone from the world they knew just like Wil. Techno wasn't happy, he didn't think he'd ever be.

He's buried his mother, and knew one day he'd bury his dad. Hell maybe he'd bury Wilbur, he knew this from a young age that one day he'd bury one of them beside his mom. He never thought of the possibility of the next grave he cried at would've been his baby brother, the one who was meant to bury them instead.

No one teaches you to be prepared for the younger deaths, they don't teach you that one day you'd bury someone younger than you. That no, you don't bury those the same age or those older, you could be burying your younger sibling. The child you made, a relative you knew. A friend's sibling you saw at their house, they never teach you to be ready for the young deaths.

No one taught them to be prepared for Tommy's.

Techno is not a good person, he doesn't have those unstained hands he had before. He doesn't have that normal kid mind, he doesn't think about what college he'd go to now. He thinks, *Why?" Why couldn't this have been different?*

Phil hasn't spoken since they found out the truth, he hadn't made a move to comfort either of the boys and Techno resents that. He focuses his anger onto that, finds a million ways to be mad at everything but himself. He's mad at Tommy, mad that the boy couldn't have just gone with his mother. Mad Tommy didn't stay put, mad that he wasn't alive. *He's mad he didn't protect him.*

He's mad at Wilbur for forcing him to think about being the peace-maker, mad that all his brother did was cry and scream. He's mad Wilbur didn't keep an eye on Tommy, mad that he let the boy slip through their eyes. He's mad Wilbur gave up on everyone, even his own self. *Techno's mad he's losing another brother.*

He's mad at Phil for not trying hard enough, for not letting them search earlier. He's mad Phil took them to that safe spot, and his father won't help their pain. He's mad that Phil is silent, so silent. *He's mad at his father because he doesn't understand, he's mad he can't help his dad.*

But most importantly. He's mad at himself, for being nothing but a silent withdrawn human who didn't try. He's mad for not being enough, mad at himself for so much.

He's mad because he knew, there's so many things he's not. But the one thing he is?

Techno's a liar, to himself and others.

He lied without even meaning too, he lied to Tommy about always being there for him. He lied and gave that kid hope.

That's what he's mad at most.

---

It's quiet after Sam brings everything to Ponk, they find a match for Tommy by some miracle and Sam had all been but kicked out because he kept hovering. Ponk tells him , *"I'll send you any major updates if something happens, but you being behind me constantly won't save the kid Sam."* And he's sent on his way, bumping into a worrying Puffy who all but hugs him before sending a very, very , painful punch to his stomach.

"I thought you were dead, you idiot, you scared me!" She cried, hugging him tightly in fear of losing her friend once more, "You can't do that again, understand?"

He huffs, hugging her back with the same tightness as he nods. "Honestly, don't plan on stepping out these gates any time soon." He pauses, pushing her away as she makes a questioning noise and musters up the seriousness that he knew would dim the mood down. "I found Phil's kid Puff, he's here."

Before Puffy can grow excited, before she can even smile Sam keeps going after a small pause as he thinks about how he could break this to her gently. There is no nice way to put this, he knew that. "But he's not okay, he was badly hurt when I found him and Ponk's working on him right now. There's- there's a chance he's not gonna make it. He's small, malnourished and weak. He'd been shot in his stomach and his arm." Sam finishes with a tight frown, looking away from the broken look that grows on Puffy's face. He felt sorry, knowing there was nothing he could do.

For a moment the woman does nothing but sniff, gathering herself slowly before she pats Sam's arm with a hurting smile. "I Think he's gonna make it, if he's Phil's kid he will. That kid had a goal, I doubt he'd let it go so easily yeah? Besides..." She trails off, looking towards the gate with a frown, "They need to say goodbye in person, they'll break if Tommy goes before they can Sam."

They need to see him breathe one last time, need to see their boy live for that last moment. To be there for him, to be there for themselves. They had to, Puffy and Sam knew this.

"They'll be back soon, won't they." Sam says, watching the gates as they move from the streets to Sam's home. He knew the answer, maybe they'd had thought they'd found nothing and came back with little hope but no thoughts of the truth. Maybe they knew, maybe they didn't.

Puffy huffs sadly, allowing some kids to run by as they giggle without a care. Ironical in a dark way, how these kids didn't even know someone their age or younger was dying just so little away from them. "They should, unless they take the scenic route to cry it out." If Puffy knew Phil though, he'd be here very soon before they all locked themselves away for a long time to mourn.

*She didn't know if she should feel bad for Phil and his kids or if she should feel bad for Tommy. All of them suffered in horrible ways, the future only bringing more it seemed.*

"It's sad." She starts up again, thanking Sam silently when they reach his home and he opens the door for her, "We as adults think we suffer more during this, because we understand it and worry about the kids. But we never do think about what the kids feel, terrified at the change and the unknown creeping towards them. Worried that they won't be a kid soon." Breathing silently, she quickly takes a seat on the old worn down couch as he huffs again. "But take the kid for example, he's experienced the world more than any of these kids

now. So much he's probably seen that we won't ever know, he grew up quick with no one to lean on and now he's dying. You never think of the kids experiencing that, that's what hurts more Sam."

There's a glint in her eyes as she speaks, her shoulders tense when she sniffs as she holds herself together again and Sam is nothing but a silent audience. "No one thinks about what they go through, Tommy was alone with no one. What if that was Tubbo? Or any of these other kids, out there could be hundreds of kids like Tommy who have no one. Those kids could be laughing, they could be without worry." But..there's always that but and he knew that.

"But we have one here and somehow, I think we failed him Sam." She says with broken cries, rubbing her knees as Sam looks away from her with his own sad little frown.

They failed him, who's to say they won't fail more?

---

*There's a brown haired girl on the stage, nervous as she steps to the mic taller than her as she whispers quietly even when the mic picks it up. "When I'm an adult, I'll work with old people and help them."*

*The audience claps with awes, watching as she's ushered off as another child replaces her with a brighter grin. "When I'm an adult, I'll be the president and buy all the race cars in the world!"*

*There's more kids who say that When, who share their childish dreams as the adults giggle and coo. One after another, five year old after five year old. They share and they pout, they scream and they huff.*

*But when Tommy steps onto the stage, Phil shoots up with a bright grin as his other two sons hush down from their whispered conversation on bets of who wouldn't be what they said they'd be.*



*“When I’m an adult, I’ll own my own business.” Tommy slightly screams into the mic as parents wince in the crowd before laughing, “I’ll own the best bakery in the world, and I’ll be richer than my Papa and brothers!”*

*They laughed out loud at the proclamation, watching as Tommy had to be dragged off the stage as he waved and said hello to them loudly.*

*When Tommy was on his third day of searching for his family, he thought to himself. When I’m an adult, I’ll be with my family and the monsters will be gone. But he doesn’t write it down, no he sends that to a shooting star later that night and begs.*

*He wishes, yet there’s no audience watching him when he says it.*

---

The sun’s almost gone by the time they pull up to their safety.

When the gates open and Phil’s car drives in slowly they take notice of the looks others give their car. They saw the stress and hesitant looks, something had happened and they knew it. When they step out, Phil’s the first to shove the shaken girl into one of the guards arms and with a cruel voice tells them, “Make sure she’s locked where she can’t see or hear anything, I don’t want to see her again.”

They didn't question it, not like they could as the man had quickly turned away to his sons ignoring her pleas as they started to walk. Carrying Tommy’s items with heavy hands, this is when Puffy runs out the medical building with a gasp. Gunning it to them with relief and determination.

“Phil- Phil listen-” She starts off quickly, matching their legs as they try to shove her away only to interrupt her.

“Not now Puffy, please.” Phil speaks blankly, dodging her hands as his son’s move past him. “We’ll talk later okay?”

There's hands grabbing at his arms now, his son's are quick to glare at the woman who couldn't care less. "Phil I mean it, you gotta listen to me!" She responds back without care, tugging at his arms as his rage grows, "You won't believe me when i say this but-"

He snaps, the built in rage and resentment finally seeping through as he yanks his arm back pushing her off with a snarl. "I said *not now* Puffy, Why won't you listen?!" He screams as Wilbur quickly moves to get him away, "None of you listen, how fuckin hard is to to shut up and leave me be huh?!"

*"Phil-"*

*"Dad c'mon-"*

"NO! I JUST LOST MY KID, I lost Tommy Puffy. He's dead- he's gone and I just need a moment without you people being on my back wanting shit!" He'd be sorry later, truly he would when he'd lay down and think about what he said. He'd regret it, apologize and try to forget that weak moment. But for now, he's tired and he can't regret this. He can't help but scream, if she had just let him go he would've been-

Puffy slaps him once, shocking him into silence as she looks dead serious grabbing onto his shoulders. There's a million things she could've told him, a million ways that that could've gone and Phil would expect not a single one. But when she whispers, "Sam found Tommy Phil. He found your kid." To him and she's so serious, She's so truthful that Phil didn't even have to search for a lie in her words.

They shut down for a moment, believing they found Tommy's body at first truly. They had been so convinced he died, so convinced they lost him for good. They were grieving a death that never happened, wasn't that ironic?

"Where- where is he?" Phil croaks out as his heart hammers in his chest, his sons pressed against him as they too looked just as desperate for the answer, "Puffy please- please tell me he's alive."

That's when she pauses, looking unsure and unready before she sighs out. "He's in the medical ward, but Phil- it's not pretty. Ponk's got him slightly stable but- but it's not set in stone. That kids a fighter, but there's not a lot of fight left." She tells them, letting go of Phil as she frowns towards the ground, "He was shot in the stomach and arm, lost a lot of blood. The arm's bullet apparently went clean through and Ponk's not convinced he'll keep that arm really. But the stomach's bullet- that's where we have more concern about his living status."

They urge her to go on, they push her to finish what she was saying. Wilbur's clutching at Henry tighter and Techno's holding that notebook with care. Phil's eyes are watering as she explains the situation, "Ponk had to get the fragments out, Tommy struggled a lot and even woke up at one point trying to tear away Ponk's hand. We don't know if anything ripped inside him, he was stitched up and banded up, given more blood too."

"But he hasn't opened his eyes since, he's alive but he's not..he's not there yet Phil." She finishes, stepping away from them as they look pale and sick. "Ponk's waiting for you- go see your kid. He's been waiting for you for a good bit don't you think?"

And that's all they need before all three of them take off with tears towards the medical ward, Techno faster than either of them as he full out sobs with each jump his legs take. His hair whips behind him and his feet ache but god's he's not slowing down for anything. He doesn't wait for his dad or his brother, he doesn't wait for anyone.

He doesn't wait to hear Ponk out when he bursts into the doors, he hears the room number and keeps running until he reaches it. Not even gently does he open the door, his heart bangs harshly and he has to rub his eyes just to see.

And see he does, his baby brother laying silently and pale on a hospital bed unresponsive but alive. Hurt and bruised but alive, he's not dead he's asleep. His brother isn't a small monster on the streets or meat inside a decayed body. Tommy isn't gone from them, because he's right there.

Techno doesn't even get to reach the bed before he breaks down and falls down on the floor whispering thank yous to something he didn't truly believe in as he sobs loud. He doesn't get up when he hears Wilbur gasp or Phil's cry, he stays on the ground and he cries.

*And for the first time in so long, Wilbur holds him silently as they cry together with Phil holding them as well. Like the two were just little kids and Phil was the only adult they knew, holding them with love.*

*For the first time in forever, Techno feels whole.*

---

There's a lot of emotions Phil had been feeling at this very moment, rushing through him like a stormy ocean drowning him at every second. He always imagined finding Tommy would've been a sweet cheerful reunion, one where he could cradle his son with all the love he could give in his veins. There's scenarios where Tommy found his way to them, crying for the gates to open and when they do they would be waiting for him on the other side excited.

There were the scenarios of course, where he was found dead. One's where he was found walking lifeless in the streets without a purpose, there's the ones where he never comes home. Phil hates them, he hated them when they began and he hated them still. But there was never ever a scenario where he was found alive but waiting at death's door.

Not once was there a scenario that ran through his head where they thought they found him dead, with a bloody notebook that told the story of his supposed death and nothing left behind to bury. No one told Phil he would have to grieve and come back only to find out he grieved for the wrong reasons, no one tells you these things.

It wasn't even him who found him, Sam, a man they grieved, brought home his son both breathing yet heavily injured. Tommy was alive yet injured badly, all because of some fools who thought they had the world in their hands.

One now dead, the other locked away for good.

He gasps when he almost runs into Ponk, he's frantic and his adrenaline was running high so you can't really blame him there. Techno had already reached the room before them, his son had seen Tommy again before they did. Wilbur is not short behind him when Phil rushes into the room, gasping again when he sees his boy on the bed.

Tommy looked so different and yet so the same. His baby was there, different but not so much. He was dirty, bruised and more. He was pale and slightly bloody, his hair was full of knots and so fucking dirty that Phil felt the itch to clean it.

There's a million ways he wishes to see Tommy again, but he takes what he can get. Because he's alive and that's all Phil wished for, for him to be alive when Phil saw him again.

That's all he needed and Phil held his sons, now hoping that Tommy would join them soon.

That's all he wished for.

---

*"Clara?"*

*Tommy's eye's open to the sun shining half on his hair, the other half of his body still under the moon, he wakes up in the field alone and dazed.*

*"Clara?"*

*He felt slightly sick, like the beating of his heart was almost too much to take. He couldn't stand up, could barely move as his body ached. He missed the relief, and wanted it back.*

*Clara doesn't answer him and his eyes close shut again.*

---

The first day they waited in the room, taking turns sleeping and helping Ponk out when he came to change Tommy's bandages and give the boy some medicine. They chat, involve

Tommy in the talks even when they get no response and they pretend he responds with some quirky response.

Wilbur has Henry washed and on the second day, the cow is placed on Tommy's bed beside him. Wilbur liked to imagine that Tommy curled up to the stuffed animal later, no one tells him otherwise. No one had the heart anyway at least.

On the third day, Ponk tells them Tommy was doing better. That there were no infections, he was responding well to the medicine and donated blood. "I'm still worried about his arm, but now it seems like he just has to learn to work the nerves again." He tells them with a smile, relieved like them that Tommy wouldn't lose his arm.

The third day, Phil is the one to get the best news before them. Techno and Wilbur had gone out for some sun, Ponk had already come by and no one else dared to come in. He's just beside Tommy's bed, reading him his favorite story as he holds his son's hand gently. Enjoying the small soft moment while it lasts as he says, "And when the moon laid to rest, her brother rises above with his bright light. Letting his sister rest until he too needed his sleep-"

Tommy's small hand squeezes his finger and Phil stops abruptly. Staring in shock at the hand like it didn't actually happen, but Phil knew it did. He felt it and not soon after he sits straight up with a grin as he speaks, "Tommy? Baby can you hear me? Hey- hey you're okay kiddo- PONK!- Oh my sweet boy, look at you.."

He doesn't feel another, Pink tells him. *"It could be him moving or his nerves moving. Hard to tell, but encourage this. If it's him, it means he can hear you. It's a good sign Phil, keep hoping."*

Tommy doesn't move an inch for another three days, They introduce him to Tubbo and Ranboo who are surprisingly gentle and understanding. The adults sitting in the room watching the two kids chat with Tommy, telling the boy plans they'll do when he wakes up. Telling Tommy jokes and secrets. It's heart-warming to see the boy's be so kind to Tommy.

When they leave, Phil notices Tubbo left his bee plushie on Tommy's bed and moves to get it when Tubbo stops him. "That's for Tommy, he can keep it till he's better."

Phil looks confused for a moment, hell a bit shocked as he sets the stuffed animal down and it grows with Tubbo nodding fiercely. Moving out the room finally when he knew Phil wouldn't touch the bee again, which he doesn't even through his confused state.

No one touches the bee, Tubbo's happy to hear that and Tom's health gets better.

The next time something happens it's with Techno, The other two gone to get food and Techno stayed on watch. He didn't speak, didn't hold Tommy's hand. He just read, quiet like they used to do back at home. Tommy would sit on his bed and play with his toys while Techno read. They never spoke and that was good enough for them really. He's actually at the good part when it happens, when Tommy makes a noise that startles him enough to jump.

And then Tommy speaks, barely understandable from an unused dry throat but it's a name and It's spoken by Tommy. That has him running out the room screaming for the others, he never sees Tommy shift slightly on his side but they do see it when they get back.

"Clara," he said. And it's enough for them, Tommy starts moving and speaking more after that.

The last day they have to wait, none of them are actually in the room when Tommy slowly opens his eyes. Wincing at the bright light he was unused too, it hurts to turn his head or even sit up but he sorta manages it. Looking around the strange room confused, wondering where exactly he was.

That's when he sees Henry and the bee, tucked safely beside both his sides. Clean and washed away from the dirt and blood, Henry's the first thing he grabs. When he reaches for the other stuffed animal, his hand burns and he realized it didn't do much other than twitch. Tommy tried again and again, only to cry out when it hurt worse than before.

He didn't bother again, instead he looked around for Cow. Wondering where his cat was if not with him, wondering where exactly he was?

Actually he really wanted to know why he was hurting so much, but before he had the chance he heard voices echoing from the door. Familiar ones at that, ones that had him sitting up more as they grew closer. The urge to stand up and check it out was big but his legs refused to move, so he waited for the voices to come to him.

They do come, one after the other not noticing him up at first as his eyes widen and his throat clogs up. They were laughing, chatting quietly as his Father held the door open for his brothers and when they made eyes with him the world grew quiet.

Until he mutters as best as he can, “Papa?”

The world grows louder once more when his family immediately runs to him, holding him as they cry and whisper soft words. *I missed you, I missed you, I missed you. We missed you, we love you.*

He holds them back, crying louder even with a dry throat as his heart clenches. Because he’s home- he’s actually home for real. He’s alive, he made it and he found them. He did it and he can finally cry with them beside him. *I missed you too, I missed you too. I love you guys so much.*

On that final day, Tommy finds his home.

---

*“Dad- dad guess what?”*

*“Hm? What kiddo?”*

*A giggle, a sneaky little giggle escapes the boy's mouth and oh did Phil miss it.*

*“I cursed- for real I really did!”*



He's home, that's all they ever wanted.

---

It's a bit before he can leave the ward and his bed, it takes a little learning to get his legs up and working again and he can't run like before. His wound on his stomach was still fragile, so he couldn't play like he used to for a long time. But when he meets Tubbo and Ranboo for the first time, they don't mind it and they even play games that won't stress out his body.

They don't ask what he experienced and he's thankful for that. Actually no one had, Wilbur had given him back his notebook and Tommy had immediately placed it under the bed in his new room. The blood made him ill, he couldn't remember what happened to cause it but he was told it wasn't good.

Tommy wouldn't be able to remember it at all really, Puffy said he was too scared to remember and that it could stay like that forever. He doesn't mind it, he could figure it out anyway. Someone hurt him badly, that was easy to guess.

On the first week of staying in his new home, he crawls into Phil's bed one night with silent tears and has his dad hold him.

"I hurt someone Papa, I hurt someone really really bad." He whispers, admits it. Because he had to let them know, and had to tell someone what he did. "She was really nice, but she wasn't okay one day and I hurt her."

"She's gone now..I'm not a good person anymore."

Phil says nothing but hum for a few minutes, rubbing his back before he pulls Tommy away with a sad smile and whispers. "Neither are we bubs, we had to do what we had to do. That's how the world is, but I still love you and your brothers."

That's the truth, even when Tommy wakes up the next day his dad still stands by it. He always did and one day, he handed his dad the notebook. Tells him, "Read all of it, every bit okay?" And walks away to play with his brothers.

That night, Phil told him. "I'm so proud of you, I'm so fucking proud of you kid. And I'm so- so sorry." Before he hands the book back, Tommy only asks him one thing.

"Was Cow gone when Sam found me?"

Two days go by, Techno reads the book and so does Puffy. Puffy calls him brave, tells him he should've never gone through it but he was brave.

Sam not only brings him a spider stuffed animal, telling him he earned it. But he also moves aside and shows him Cow on his leash, through tears he begs Phil to let Cow stay and he agrees.

"He was the one who sent me to search, you know." Sam whispers to him later, petting the cat's head with a grin, "Your dad's a sweet man kid, cherish that."

And then there's Wilbur, who was basically Tommy's shadow now always following and watching. Tommy understands why, he can't deny that it makes him feel safer. *It lets him know he wasn't dreaming, that all he had to do was turn and Wilbur would finally be there for once.* And he thrives on the attention really, Wilbur sometimes picks him up when he hurts and even carries him on his shoulder like a king.

But he apologizes a lot, telling him things like, "I shouldn't have let you go, I should've made you stay." or "You're hurting because of me, you suffered because I looked away."

"I'm so sorry." Over and over like a loop, repeating daily without fail. It gets slightly creepy, but Tommy always tells him. "I forgive you, I really do."

I forgive you, I don't hate you. I'm not mad at you, It's okay. Every time, every day. Wilbur's less sane, he's not okay and Tommy was told that. The Wil he knew wasn't there anymore, just a part of the new Wilbur. This one was hurting, this one has hurt others. This one wanted

to kill for him and that scared Tommy, not that he'd tell Wil that. But it wasn't fun some days when he'd see that manic look in Wil's eyes when danger got too close, or when he freaked out if Tommy disappeared for even a second. His older brother refused to see Puffy, Techno tells Tommy, "There's nothing we can do but wait till he breaks, he'll crash soon now."

Tommy wonders how long they'll wait, he wonders how bad the crash will be too. Tubbo thinks it'll be destructive to others and Ranboo thinks Wilbur was gonna hurt his own self. Tommy thinks it'll be both when he finds out Wilbur was going to open the gates and kill everyone if Tommy was dead.

*"I'm scared, Wilbur."* He whispers to his brother one night, hugging him tightly as Wilbur grows quiet from his singing, *"I'm scared I'm gonna lose you, that you'll hurt yourself. I'm scared."*

*"I don't wanna lose you."*

Wilbur seeks out Puffy the next day, he even joins Tommy sometimes and they just talk. And Tommy thinks maybe things will be better, once he can convince the other two to join that is.

"I'm home Clara, I made it." He tells the newly made grave, one he had begged to be built for his friend with a tiny poem sketched on the sides. Yellow roses planted all around her grave that he visits every day with Cow. "You'd have loved it here, But you're happier somewhere else right? Papa said you are, I hope you are."

He sets down a handmade bracelet, one that wasn't very pretty and colors of all kinds meshed together. Beads that were slightly scratched or chipped, yet to him it was perfect. "I'm not mad you lied anymore, you had to right? Cause you knew I wasn't gonna let you go, so you made me." Tommy pouts slightly, fixing the flowers slightly with a cheerful huff.

"Thank you for helping me Clara, I'll see you tomorrow okay?"

Tommy grins even when there's no response, the wind moves his hair like a hand had ruffled its way through the golden curls. He grabs Cow, turns around and runs straight to his Family laughing. Telling them lies of what Clara had said, they play along with him as his brothers swing him down the road with his Dad telling them to be careful with his arm.

The sun shines down fully on his body, wrapping him in a tight hug where the moon can no longer reach him. He's with his brothers again, his Dad again. There's days where he hurts, where he can't move without his body burning or days when he doesn't want to move. Days where he thinks he's dreaming and moves to write in the notebook, there's bad days as there's good days. He can't use his arm like he could before, that would stay with him forever he's told.

But he's home, and to him that's all he cares about.

Tommy was nine years old when this started and he lost his family. Nine when he was truly alone for the first time. He was Ten when he saw someone die, Ten when he killed someone. He was a kid when he walked his way home, he was still a child. One who endured something a kid never should've gone through, yet he survived it.

He's ten years old when he finds his family again, alive just like him and messed up like him as well.

There's only one thing Tommy writes in his note-book for the last time, one tiny thing that ends his story in that book.

*I'm okay.*

And that book is put under his bed, for what he hopes is good.

---

*It's so weird writing to you again, I was ready to never touch this again really. Keeping you under my bed was relieving, but that wasn't fair for you. You were the one thing that kept me comforted when I was searching, you were like a best friend in a way and I just tossed you*

*away when things got better. Well I think I should start off the news right?*

*I found them, my family. I found my dad and brothers finally, Wilbur and Techno are still bitches they never changed that part of them. Phil's really protective over me too, that grew tiresome later on but I still love it you know? Oh oh- I made friends too when I woke up here. Tubbo and Ranboo, the craziest fuckers I've ever met. Funny enough Tubbo's like me now, kind of.*

*I was shot at, that's why the last page was all bloody and sorry. Fucked up my arm bad, but I worked around that. But no- see Tubbo actually lost his arm about two months ago. He made himself a new one which is kinda bad-ass, he can attach a knife and shit. Note to self: Zombie bites apparently hurt like hell, Tubbo said that not me.*

*Ranboo's just as bad-ass though, he's able to sneak in and out of places and can whoop anything's ass in a second. Which is weird because he's terrified of me and Tubbo, though I understand why Tubbo.*

*Kinda obvious but the world never got better, or well went back to before. You get used to it after awhile really, but we still hoped. But nah, those monsters still roam, they grow but they're still dumb ass hell.*

*Cow's a house cat nowadays, doesn't like going outside cause he's a spoiled piece of shit. I love him though, his cuddles are the best. But I think I should tell you this, A guy named Sam. He's the one who saved me when I was dying, he's the reason I found my family again.*

*He was the best friend I'd ever known, I'm thankful for him and what he did. He saved me, taught me all sorts of tricks and I'll never not find him cool. He was great, you should know this.*

*I think it's weird now, to write about this shit after so much time. You were gathering dust up when I found you again, my hand-writing sucked so bad. I was so naïve too, but I guess that was a gift during that time.*

*It's weird thinking that I was a little kid when I last wrote to you, just a ten year old looking for his family. My brothers were teens still, Dad was still an old ass man. But now they're older, now I'm older.*

*The funniest part about this? I was turning Ten when I found you for the first time. Ten when I really wrote to you for the first time. Seeking out you for comfort in the best ways a Ten year old could.*

*And now I'm about to turn sixteen, and this is the last time I will really write to you. I have no reason too anymore, I got what I was searching for and your purpose was served. You can rest now without some greasy hand touching you or stabbing you with a pen now huh? It's kind of sad saying goodbye to you even though you're a book.*

*I guess you did a lot more than I thought, but things have to end no matter how good they are. And this is that ending for you.*

*Thank you.*

*Goodbye now :)*

*(P.S you genuinely are the most suckiest book ever, i remember why i hated these cheap shits. Bye for real now! Tubbo says bye too.))*

## Chapter End Notes

Everyone sobbing over Tommy: ohmugod he's dead-ohmyhofhelomeimdying

Tommy in the field chilling: ayo is that my mom????

(This felt rushed, but I didn't want to keep the reunion waiting anymore and I can't write medical scenes for shit so.

If u guys say Tommy surviving isn't possible, remember I based this off Carls shot from the walking dead. That boy survived every shot, if he can so can tommy!

It's also fan fiction so 😊

Now for the long bit, Originally there was going to be eight chapters but the last chapter was going to be super short with sixteen year old Tommy finding the notebook.

However i liked this outcome better, maybe i'll add a short part maybe i won't. But I know right now, we've finally finished and it was such a fun ride.

I wish it could've been longer, but schedules grew short and I knew personally that i wouldn't have time for this as much anymore and i'd have gotten burned out. I have so many other stories i need to focus on and this one ran it's run for the right time.

When I started this i was seventeen, going through shit and this was my break-through story with writing. I didn't regret any of the chapters badly, didn't give up on it even when i got tired and here I am. Two days away from being eighteen, happier than ever and finally finishing this son of a bitch.

Thank you all for the support you've given me, the comments that encouraged me and made me laugh. The kudos and shares it got- My first chaptered story finally finished, this is it.

Thank you for reading I write my life :) You guys are so fucking cool.

catch you on other stories <3 ))

Comment or I change the ending. /j

## End Notes

Tommy: everything is gonna be ok, ill be ten years old and my family can be with me

Narrator: What the young child did not know was everything would in fact not be ok.

((Literally was like lol character who writes their life in a notebook but its sad and made it into this let's GO if you see a typo no u didn't.))

Comment or Tommy becomes a zombie smh /j

Works inspired by this one

[Where the Mourning Doves Sing](#) by [Crossing18](#)

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